

Paradise Lost
and Other Poems

John Milton

With an Introduction by
Edward M. Cifelli, PhD,
and a New Afterword by
Regina Marler

Annotated by Edward Le Comte



SIGNET CLASSICS

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John Milton (1608-74) was the son of a successful scrivener, who supported his extensive education. After receiving his BA and MA from Cambridge University, Milton spent a number of years on the Continent to round out his education. By 1644, Milton was a renowned poet but he spent more and more of his time on political questions. His pamphlets on the Reformation and republicanism brought him to the attention of Oliver Cromwell, who appointed him to his government. After the restoration of Charles II in 1659, Milton narrowly escaped execution. He spent his remaining years working on such works as *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*.

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INTRODUCTION

Milton for Our Times

1. Duty v. Enjoyment

Modern-day readers of *Paradise Lost* may feel something like a dreary sense of duty at the prospect of having to spend several hours, days, or weeks with John Milton, the premier spokesman of seventeenth-century English Puritanism. The feeling is complicated for American readers by the connection (real or imagined) of Puritanism to whatever sexual hang-ups have mysteriously managed to persist into the new millennium. What good, new readers may think, can come of getting to know John Milton? What can his version of the Garden of Eden story possibly say to twenty-first-century readers? Is it really worth the bother?

The answer to the last question is yes, of course, but the possibly surprising chief reason is because *Paradise Lost* is enjoyable, not because it is uplifting, if in fact it is, or because it is nearly 350 years old—a detail that engages antiquarians and academics more than general readers. Nor are these readers likely to enjoy the book primarily for its richly imagined version of the Judeo-Christian creation myth. And no amount of professorial assertion about the baroque beauties of Milton's grand style is likely to persuade readers to pick up this formidable English classic. *Paradise Lost* does compel the attention of some readers for all these reasons—and no doubt many others—but the too often ignored simple truth about the book is that it is a great read, with a wonderful, sometimes lusty, cast of characters, a carefully arranged plot, and here and there even a hint of humor—the surefire ingredients of bestsellers even today. *Paradise Lost* is certainly worth the bother.

But is it really enjoyable? Isn't it like all the other "classics" Mark Twain once quipped about as works "everybody wants to have read and nobody wants to read"? Perhaps, but not all classics have such an interest as *Paradise Lost* does, for example, in romantic love and sex—not only on Earth, but also in Heaven. (See Books VIII and IX.) And even among epic poems, this one is notable for its violent and high-stakes scenes of war. (See especially Book VI.) Readers have always thrilled to Milton's heroic superheroes and indestructible archvillains, characters who may remind younger readers of similarly immune-to-harm figures in twenty-first-century comic books, movies, television shows, and computer games. (See, for example, how the Archangel Michael swings his mighty sword at Satan, slashing through "All his right side" [VI, 327], and how his wounds then magically heal themselves.) In another vein, it's one kind of slightly off-center enjoyment to stare openmouthed at the page over Milton's infuriating habit of claiming biblical authority for his personal brand of male superiority. It's so blatant and unapologetic as to leave modern-day readers stunned—and yet it is magnificently balanced by one of the great moments in *Paradise Lost*, when Adam loses his priggish ego, becomes fully humanized (at least for a moment), and deliberately chooses Eve over Heaven: "if death/Consort with thee, death is to me as life . . ." (IX, 953-54).

Still another aspect of *Paradise Lost* new readers will enjoy is the sheer audacity of the thing—not only its size (twelve books and 10,565 lines in the 1674 edition) but also its scope. Milton set out to write, as he put it, "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme" (I, 16), which, it turns out, is nothing less than to "justify the ways of God to men" (I, 26). In an age like the current one, when poetic ambition is generally satisfied with a one-page lyric, here is a monumental narrative poem complete with a full cast of characters and a sustained drama. How can readers not bow in admiration of a mind that could imagine the architecture of Heaven, Hell, and Paradise—not to mention the geography of the intellectual and spiritual landscapes in and between each? There is Milton standing proud, tall, and stern, with a bold self-assurance born of theological and intellectual certitudes, announcing his grand goal. It doesn't matter that he may in the end fall short, or that modern readers (children of Chaos Theory, moral relativism, and the Computer Age) may not share his worldview. It doesn't even matter that Milton was stubbornly, Puritanically, doctrinaire about his story—wasn't Dante guilty of a similar narrowness in *The Divine Comedy*? No, what strikes new and old readers alike when they come to Milton's announced purpose is his breathtaking, irresistible audacity. Wouldn't it be a great thing, readers catch themselves thinking, if he could actually do it?

The grandeur of Milton's language in *Paradise Lost* is often praised, and rightly so, despite some difficulties that need mentioning, but for now, however, note that it is impossible not to be

impressed by the stateliness, the formality, and the dignity of Milton's poetry in *Paradise Lost*—all the more striking to contemporary readers when set against the casual informality of the early twenty-first century. For the versification, Milton chose blank verse, the form popularized by Elizabethan dramatists earlier in the seventeenth century, even though the lack of rhyme in an epic poem drew attention to itself. (The point was sticky enough for the publisher, in subsequent printings, to explain that Homer and Virgil hadn't written in rhymes; that rhyme had been added by later poets just to distract readers from "wretched matter and lame metre"; and that anyway all readers with "judicious ears" would agree that rhyme was "trivial" and added "no true musical delight." See "The Verse" preceding Book I.) The blank verse is, in fact, so successful in *Paradise Lost* that there are long portions in which the dramatic action simply takes over, and one of the usual topics of classroom discussion is whether it is indeed an epic or a drama. The debate is no doubt more important to literary critics and historians than to readers, who are, after all, at liberty to enjoy what they please—and the drama seems to please them most. It is in the dramatic sequences that Milton seems most sure-handed as he navigates one ten-syllable line after another, managing in the process to make them (and the characters who speak them) different from one another at the same time that they are similar. Perhaps most amazing is that, despite a distance of three and a half centuries, an overfondness for the baroque, and an American readership that has a slightly different voice box from the British, Milton manages very often to write lines that sound something like the way modern-day English is spoken. No small trick.

But like most language three and a half centuries old, it also presents difficulties to readers coming to it for the first time. The inversions, allusions, and Latinate diction cause most of the problems, but even pronunciation stands occasionally in the way of grasping the sense and the movement of the words. The solution to these problems is to read slowly, work carefully through complicated syntax, reread particularly obscure constructions, check the footnotes, and even read the words aloud if it seems the ear might help when the eye alone can't get the job done. And don't be afraid to abandon some passages as simply too dense or knotty to follow. This is a long poem, and a few lost passages aren't going to matter in the long run.

Another problem is that many of the more difficult passages in *Paradise Lost* arise from Milton's vast classical erudition, his seemingly endless knowledge of biblical lore, and his use of epic conventions familiar to more of the literary community then than now. Today "epic" is much more loosely used to describe anything that is above the norm in size and scope. It is therefore not surprising that the hardest going in *Paradise Lost* comes when Milton resorts to formula-driven epic conventions and seems to get temporarily lost amid roll calls, catalogues, extended similes, biblical geography lessons, detailed vistas, psychologically telling dreams, and so on. Many will learn to enjoy these sequences in their own right, but at worst they can be silently borne as necessary interludes, temporary interruptions of the narrative and dramatic action. Certainly the ample glories of *Paradise Lost*, like those in the finest grand opera, are worth waiting for.

2. The Glories

The first of these glories, as readers have commented on from the beginning, is the peculiarly human archvillain himself, Satan. When Milton, blind apologist of the Puritan Commonwealth in the 1650s, sat down to write his epic poem on the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he not only had the unfortunate pair themselves for his story; he also had God, the Son of God, a host of archangels and rebel angels, plus Satan for his *dramatis personae*. Furthermore, Milton understood the importance of creating a worthy chief antagonist, not just a villain who was larger than life, but one who was complex in his intellectual and psychological makeup. Of course, Milton is consistent in his vilification of Satan—witness, for example, some of the ways he labels him, as the "hellish Pest" (II, 735), the "fraudulent impostor foul" (III, 692), the "wily Adder" (IX, 625), the "Prince of Darkness" (X, 383), and many more. In this sense, Milton never wavers in his indictment of the "Author of Evil" (VI, 262), and yet the character he created is so brilliant, especially in the early going, so articulate, so driven, so almost-human in his frailties that he cannot fail to resonate with modern readers. In some of the most celebrated lines in *Paradise Lost*, Satan, expelled from Heaven and "Chained on the burning lake" (I, 210), with head held high and eyes still blazing, ponders his situation and declares, "The mind is its own place, and in itself/Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven" (I, 254–55). And then, overfilled with a burning, unrepentant bitterness, he determines that for him at least it is "Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven" (I, 263). Satan's passionate misery is deeply felt by readers who either have themselves been defeated and then angrily turned inward for a new and perhaps painful resolve—or can readily imagine doing so. It is after all the human way.

In the early going, before he is shown in all his incestuous ugliness at the end of Book II as the father of the hideous monsters Sin and Death, Satan seems almost the perfect epic hero: imposing, capable of superhuman courage, even in one sense elevated, both in language and sentiments. Milton was clearly walking a dangerous line here, for Satan had to be the ultimate villain, not a sympathetic victim, and although Milton did manage to regain his moral footing and return to condemning Satan, readers will always be struck by Satan's human qualities—his anger and resentment over his defeat, his pride and continuing determination, and his undaunted courage. Is this attractiveness of Satan's adequately explained by Milton's need to create a worthy antagonist for his story? Did he inadvertently raise his archvillain too high and make him too humanly appealing? Or is it perhaps that readers identify more often with rebel angels than with archangels? Perhaps the biggest question is why Milton never revised the early Satan to make him less attractive. Of course that would have required him to tamper with some of his best writing, so perhaps it was that, in the contest between good Puritanism and good writing, Milton showed his own humanity and chose the writing.

Another of the glories of *Paradise Lost* that readers have commented on from the outset is the complicated relationship between Adam and Eve, with Milton caught between black-and-white biblical authority, as he understood it, and the actual complexities of male-female relationships, perhaps as he had experienced them in his three marriages. As is the case with Satan, Adam is hardly a uniformly attractive dramatic figure, and yet he does have a couple of moments onstage that are very nearly perfect. The first has to do with sex, the second with love. In the first, in Book VIII, Adam tells Raphael with deadpan humor about how he came in a dream to notice that he alone among all God's creatures had no female companion: "I found not what methought I wanted still" (355). So Adam complains to the "Author of this Universe" (360) about his lack of a "human consort" (392), but God, having fun with the pushy young Adam, asks what this business about a consort is all about—after all, He doesn't have one either:

Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed
Of happiness, or not, who am alone
From all eternity? for none I know
Second to me or like, equal much less.
How have I, then, with whom to hold converse
Save with the creatures which I made, and those
To me inferior . . . ?

(404-10)

A tough question, to be sure. But Adam reminds his Maker that he has a job to do, to "beget/Like of his like" (423-24), and how is he going to do that all by himself? For such work, he says, he is "defective" and requires "Collateral love and dearest amity" (425-26). So it is sex, at last, that he is after, though he doesn't quite have the language to say so. But God, turning convivial and jovially paternal for this father-son moment, replies in good spirits that He has only been teasing Adam, that He's had in mind a partner for him all along, a special gift to enjoy: "Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire" (451). And He is as good as His word, for after Eve is created from a rib on Adam's left side, Adam finally has true happiness: "The spirit of love and amorous delight" (477). Eve ("Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye" [488]) then gives Adam "nuptial sanctity and marriage rites" (487).

But Milton wasn't finished quite yet with the subject of sex. Adam, finally mated "exactly to [his] heart's desire," confesses to Raphael that this particular pleasure ("Commotion strange" [531]) had been special ("in all enjoyments else/Superior . . ." [531-32])—even for Paradise. Liking it as much as he does, he can't help wondering if there is sex in Heaven: "Bear with me, then, if lawful what I ask./Love not the Heavenly Spirits, and how their love/ Express they, by looks only, or do they mix/Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?" (614-17). It's a safe bet he is hoping for "immediate touch" over "looks only." Raphael, however, like a father explaining the birds and bees to his son, blushes "a smile that glowed/Celestial rosy-red" (618-19), clears his throat, and starts off, but soon he gets tangled up in limbs, joints, and spirits—and decides to quit with as much of his dignity intact as he can salvage. Before leaving Adam and Eve to their own devices, though, Raphael adds one cautionary note: "take heed lest passion sway/Thy judgement to do aught, which else free-will/ Would not admit" (635-37). Good advice from angels, but always difficult for young men to follow.

3. Fallen or Risen?

Nothing in *Paradise Lost* is further from humor, more solemnly noble in its way, than Adam's decision to join Eve in sin, that is, to turn his back on Paradise—even to accept death and the loss of Heaven as a consequence. Milton opens Book IX, the story of the Fall and the very heart of *Paradise Lost*, with Adam's too-usual smugness toward Eve. He condescendingly comments, "nothing lovelier can be found/In woman, than to study household good,/And good works in her husband to promote" (232—34). After the lovers have their first quarrel in Paradise (not over his remark, but over Eve wanting to work a different part of the Garden from Adam), Satan arrives as a serpent, tempts Eve, and seduces her into eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. God has warned that death would follow from eating that particular fruit, but after she eats, not only does Eve find herself quite alive, but she also feels surprisingly good about herself, not just "more equal," she thinks, but "perhaps,/A thing not undesirable, sometime/Superior. . ." (see 816—25). She likes this feeling so much, in fact, that she is tempted not to share it with Adam at all. But after she reexamines the situation and realizes she might yet die, that a new Eve might be created in her place, and that Adam might then enjoy Eden with someone else, she thinks it might be best after all to share. However, when she approaches with her new knowledge and fruit, Adam recognizes instantly that she is lost, that Satan has "Defaced, deflowered" her (901).

But Adam, instead of picking up his earlier theme by bitterly reminding Eve about the purpose of a woman's life being to promote good works in her husband, is suddenly transformed, fully aware, perhaps for the first time, of the depths of love in his own heart:

How can I live without thee? how forgo
Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined,
To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
Should God create another Eve. and I
Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
Would never from my heart. No, no! I feel
The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
Bone of my bone thou art, and from thy state
Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.

(908—16)

Still, he does not eat the fruit quite yet. First he ponders his choices, just as Eve did before him, the human thing after all. The arguments he comes up with, of course, amount to little more than rationalizations, mere intellectual exercises, and they are totally beside the only point that matters—the flesh-and-bone Eve standing before him. Turning to her, he says:

I with thee have fixed my lot,
Certain to undergo like doom; if death
Consort with thee, death is to me as life,
So forcible within my heart I feel
The bond of Nature draw me to my own;
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
Our state cannot be severed, we are one,
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.

(952—59)

It's hard not to be proud of Adam here, as he looks squarely at all he stands to lose, yet steadfastly, loyally, devotedly chooses to stay with the woman he loves. It's a human choice, of course, not a heavenly one, yet Adam, in his moment of courage, shines. From Milton's standpoint, he was once again on shaky ground, wavering between his dogma and his art. He could certainly have gone back to temper the nobility in Adam that he had written into the scene, but he let it stand—just as he had let stand the wonderful lines he had written for Satan earlier. He must have liked as much as subsequent generations have this exhilarating expression of the romantic love of Adam for Eve, and one imagines that only later, under the requirement of the story he had set out to write, did he force himself back to condemning them. But regardless of how the preordained story had to resolve itself, there's a strong temptation to think Adam's heart may have been right at his moment of decision—one of the truest and most moving moments in all English literature.

Oh, yes—it's worth every bit of the bother.

"Lycidas" and *Samson Agonistes*

Modern readers may have more trouble with "Lycidas" than with *Samson Agonistes* and prefer *Paradise Lost* to either—and for some obvious reasons. *Paradise Lost* is a literary epic, a form that is no longer written, but which in terms of characterization and plot does not (always) seem so very

different from novels and screenplays. “Lycidas,” however, is a pastoral elegy (also sometimes called a pastoral allegory), a form rooted in ancient Greek idylls and classical Roman eclogues; it is a form that has shepherd-poets, invectives against death, flower symbolism, and other similarly remote features—and therefore it is today a largely forgotten ancient form that has no modern counterpart it might sound familiar to. It would be more remarkable if modern readers did not have trouble with it.

Written when Milton was not yet twenty-nine, and called by him a “Monody” (itself a dated term meaning “dirge” or “lament”), “Lycidas” commemorates the life of his friend Edward King, who had drowned earlier that same year. And even though it is generally acknowledged to be the finest example of its form in English, readers, like the famously sharp-tongued Samuel Johnson in the eighteenth century, are often impatient with its old-fashioned formulas. “Nothing,” Johnson wrote, “can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone. . . .” But as dismayingly remote as its form may be, “Lycidas” can still be enjoyed if one accepts it on its own terms and determines on going in to learn about rather than struggle against the form. Learning to love a piece of literature for its odd shape and peculiar mannerisms is at least half the joy of being literate. Of course, one is free as well to be happy if the piece happens also to be short.

Samson Agonistes, however, is another story, for there are moments in this play that are as engaging as any in *Paradise Lost*. Based on the Aristotelian theory of tragedy and modeled on Aeschylus’s *Prometheus Bound* and Sophocles’s *Oedipus at Colonus*, *Samson Agonistes* was written as a closet drama, a work intended to be read rather than acted. The story of Samson is from the Bible, of course, Judges to be exact, and it tells the story of an Israelite who is born to a barren woman and pledged to God. Under the terms of the pledge, Samson is not allowed to have his hair cut, but is, however, free to marry a Philistine girl, who tricks him into killing thirty men, which soon escalates into a thousand as he fights with superhuman strength—and the jawbone of an ass. It’s at this point that Samson falls for the temptress Dalila, who, on behalf of the Philistine leaders in Gaza, worms the secret of his strength out of him: Samson is then subdued, taken into slavery, and blinded. Unfortunately, all this happens before the play opens. Milton’s Samson furiously rages, when it does start, against Dalila’s “foul effeminacy” (410) and manages by the play’s end to have his mortal revenge against the Philistines on their high holy day, but despite the dignity and disciplined orderliness of Samson’s biblically scripted vengeance, it is in the key scene with Dalila (who is onstage for a very brief time) that *Samson Agonistes* comes alive. Sparks always light up Milton’s scenes with women.

Samson calls Dalila “My wife, my traitress” (725) and will have nothing to do with her, yet she makes an appeal to him, claiming she is sorry for what she did, frightened too, but most of all, she is moved by “conjugal affection” (739) to see his face one last time. Samson, however, won’t be sweettalked anymore by her “wonted arts,” what he calls the “arts of every woman false like thee” (748–49). Dalila defends herself by saying she was weak and suffered from “curiosity.” Then, once she knew some secrets, she couldn’t help but “publish them”—all, she says, “common female faults” (773–77). He should have known better than to “have trusted that [secret] to a woman’s frailty. . . .” (783). Samson doesn’t give an inch, replying that she was indeed weak—for Philistine gold and lust. But Dalila continues to defend herself well, saying it wasn’t gold at all that swayed her, but the appeals of the magistrates, princes, and priests of her country that she steal the secret of Samson’s strength—both to protect the Philistines from him in the future as well as to punish him for his past actions against them. Now, she says, she wants to make it up to Samson by seeking his release, but he turns her away one final time and says to the Chorus:

So let her go; God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

(999—1002)

It remains a curious truth that despite Milton’s ambitious high-mindedness, his frontal attack on the literary, political, and religious problems of his own and perhaps all time, he also had an unerring ear for the sort of dialogue that rings true between men and women, whether they be loving partners, bitter antagonists, or both at the same time. His forms may be dated, but when Milton’s men and women talk to (or about) each other, they sound hauntingly modern.

—Edward M. Cifelli, Ph.D.

THE LIFE OF MILTON

The life of Milton is much more fully and intimately known than the lives of his great predecessors—and favorites—among the English poets: Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakespeare. The reasons are three. First, the latter part of the seventeenth century saw the dawning of modern interest in the biography of authors, which was to lead to such spectacular products a century later as Boswell's *Johnson* and Johnson's own *Lives of the English Poets*. No less than five sketches of Milton's life were written between his death in 1674 and the end of the century. Second, he was more than an author: he became a public figure, known for his controversial prose and his service to the Cromwellian regime before he was known as a poet. Third, Milton, above and beyond his thirty-one Familiar Letters in Latin, did not hesitate on occasion to bring himself into his own writings. He did this to an extent that may be measured by the fact that the compilation *Milton on Himself* has two hundred seventy pages of direct quotation.

The poet was a Londoner most of his life. The house he lived in longest was the house in which he was born, at the corner of Cheap and Bread streets, December 9, 1608. His father, also named John, maintained a scrivener's shop there under the sign of the Spread Eagle. Scriveners served as notaries and preparers of legal papers, and could prosper because of their advance knowledge of property transfers. John Milton the elder did prosper, to such a degree that he could retire, first, in 1632, to the suburb of Hammersmith, then, in 1635, to a country estate in Horton—a far cry from his struggling youth. He had come to London from Oxfordshire about the age of twenty-one upon being disinherited by his father, a recusant, “because he kept not the Catholic religion” and was caught reading the Bible.

Somehow, perhaps as a boy chorister at Christ Church, Oxford, the poet's father early acquired training in his lifelong avocation of music. He composed at twenty “an *In Nomine* of forty parts, for which he was rewarded with a gold medal and chain by a Polish prince, to whom he presented it” and went on to gain, as a musician of the school of Byrd, “the reputation of a considerable master in this most charming of all the liberal sciences.” He was invited by the great madrigalist Thomas Morley—who composed for *As You Like It*—to contribute to *The Triumphs of Oriana*, a cantus book honouring Queen Elizabeth in one of the last years of her reign.

About the poet's mother, Sarah, less is known, the very form of her last name being uncertain. It is not known when she was married, or how often. Milton's only reference states that she had a reputation in the neighborhood for her alms-giving. In two letters to his friend Diodati written not long after Mrs. Milton's death on April 3, 1637, Milton makes no mention of the event, and when he turned to poetry in the fall of that year it was to memorialize another friend—in “*Lycidas*.” (Similarly, in the month that Milton's first wife died he wrote a sonnet to Cromwell. In both cases the conclusion could be that the poet was turning away from an event too deep for tears, melodious or otherwise.) The antiquarian Aubrey reported that Milton's mother “had very weak eyes, and used spectacles presently after she was thirty years old.”

With his sister and, after 1615, younger brother, the future poet moved about as a boy in an apartment often resonant with the sound of the “pealing organ,” which he himself learned to play, with viols and virginals, with “lute well touched, or artful voice.” After going to petty school, he received private tutoring from a Scotch Presbyterian, Thomas Young, whose ally in ecclesiastical controversy he was to be more than a score of years later. A canvas now in the Morgan Library in New York and reproduced as the frontispiece of the Columbia Edition of Milton's works is the most striking as well as the first of all the portraits, showing an earnest and winsome boy of ten who was already, according to Aubrey, a poet: the brocaded doublet and delicate lace collar seem to symbolize the not yet past glories of the Renaissance, while the intent eyes and the auburn hair cropped closely according to the Puritan prescription are mediated by the sensitive chin and lips.

Milton was fifteen when he produced his earliest surviving lines, paraphrases of Psalms cxiv and cxxxvi. By then he was attending that by no means average school a few blocks away, St. Paul's (organized by John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral, early in Henry VIII's reign), and brought to this or any poetic task already an abundance of Latin and Greek (he was subsequently to put Psalm cxiv into Greek dactylic hexameters) and at least the beginnings of Hebrew. A fellow pupil was the closest friend of his youth, Charles Diodati, and he seems to have had a fruitful relationship with a teacher there, Alexander Gill the younger, the headmaster's son and eventual successor.

It is important to note the many cordial relations Milton enjoyed (with both sexes) in the course of a life marked by heated controversies. The first of the latter on record developed during his first year at Christ's College, Cambridge, 1625—26—a quarrel with his tutor William Chappell. The result was the student's “rustication” or suspension. He went to London and addressed Diodati a

Latin poem, "Elegia I," on the subject, line 16 of which may refer to unspeakable corporal punishment—"whipped him," said Aubrey. Most modern readers are reluctant to believe that Milton underwent this particular humiliation, but there is nothing historically improbable about it. The master of Cromwell's college, Samuel Ward of Sidney Sussex (Cambridge), had the scholars (many of whom, it must be remembered, were just entering upon their teens) whipped in hall when they offended, and as Dr. Johnson (who had his own reasons for believing the story) might have opined, "If Cromwell received the cane, who will deny the same to Milton?" In any case Milton was soon back under a more agreeable tutor, without having missed a term.

He was turning into a proud, serious, reserved young man, whose nickname was "The Lady of Christ's." (Virgil had borne, as Milton would have been glad to remember, a similar sobriquet: Parthenias—"Miss Virginity.") When he gave in assembly the first of a series of required Latin orations (*prolusiones*), on looking around he saw mostly unfriendly countenances, perhaps, he conjectured, because his intellectual interests were different, as he was proudly sure his style was. By the time of the sixth of these prolusions (July 1628), titled "Sportive Exercises do not stand in the way of Philosophic Studies," his popularity has risen, and playful as the elephant's "lithe proboscis" in *Paradise Lost*, he gratefully begs pardon in advance for any comic license contrary to his usual modesty and labours to be a jolly good vulgar fellow. Of more lasting significance is that he overleapt the University statutes ordaining that all the academic discourses should be in one of the learned tongues and broke out into fifty heroic couplets, "At a Vacation Exercise," that ranks with "On the Death of a Fair Infant" as his earliest original English poem. Before going on to scholastic puns, the author soars to "Heaven's door" and grandly declares his ambition to compose epic poems "Such as the wise Demodocus once told/ In solemn songs at King Alcinous' feast." The miniature epic "In Quintum Novembris" (On the Fifth of November—the anniversary of the Gunpowder Plot), was even then one year behind him.

The "Fair Infant Dying of a Cough" was Milton's niece. "O fairest flower no sooner blown but blasted," he begins, and launches into a flurry of conceits, ending with the sage advice that the mother, Anne, should "wisely learn to curb thy sorrows wild" in expectation of an offspring that "shall make thy name to live." Alas, neither of the later children of Milton's sister, Edward and John Phillips, amounted to anything, in spite of having their uncle for a tutor in the 1640s.

The Cambridge student had already mourned in Latin verses the University beadle, the vice chancellor, and two bishops. It goes against the popular notion of inspiration that most of the poetry of Milton's youth, right up to and including "Lycidas," was occasional. On his twenty-third birthday he wrote a sonnet; on the death of old Hobson, the University carrier, he composed two sets of relentlessly punning heroic couplets; he put forth octosyllabics when the Marchioness of Winchester (a Catholic, but the saving grace was that she was said to be leaning to Protestantism) died in childbed (Ben Jonson also commemorated her); and made his English debut in print, anonymously, with "An Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet W. Shakespeare" in the 1632 Second Folio.

But the greatest poem before "L' Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" was the "Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," composed in December 1629. Had the author died then, the thin-spun life cut by the blind Fury just after his twenty-first birthday, he would still have held a secure place in English poetry, ranking with Crashaw. The essence of what Hallam called "perhaps the most beautiful ode in the language" Tillyard found to be "not stateliness excusing conceit, but homeliness, quaintness, tenderness, extravagance, and sublimity, harmonised by a pervading youthful candour and ordered by a commanding architectonic grasp." Much in this baroque or "mannerist" masterpiece looks forward to *Paradise Lost*, most obviously the fiends and false deities, "Peor and Baalim" and "sullen Moloch" and the "old Dragon under ground" that "swinges the scaly horror of his folded tail." Christ in his cradle can, like the infant Hercules, strangle this serpent. As will prove so characteristic of Milton's art, classical and Christian elements are held in brilliant tension, as surely as Christmas coincides with the winter solstice or Easter is the name of a pagan goddess.

The young poet was moved by his success to celebrate more feasts, in "The Passion" and "Upon the Circumcision," but these fail, the former being left unfinished. Better are "On Time" and "At a Solemn Music" and even some autobiographical sonnets (along with a canzone) in Italian. Milton had proclaimed in his first English sonnet, "O nightingale that on yon bloomy spray," his willingness to fall in love, and now a black-eyed, dark-tressed, polyglot foreigner named Emilia had inspired him to write in her native tongue. This was evidently an encounter lasting not much longer than glimpses of British beauties commemorated in Milton's Ovidian Latin elegies that also—I, V, and VII—celebrate the rites of spring, what the "Song on May Morning" catalogues as "Mirth and youth and warm desire!" In contrast Elegia VI lays down an ascetic regimen for the epic poet, and Edward Phillips reported that the vein of the author of *Paradise Lost* "never flowed freely but from the autumnal equinox to the vernal."

Before this winter seriousness descended, however, came the twin poems known to every schoolchild (of how little can this be said anymore!). Of uncertain date, with scenery that cannot be pinned down, these belong immemorably to a time when the world was younger; where the eighteenth century went wooden in its imitations perhaps because it was already too old, Milton achieved the perfect matching of art and vitality. *L'Allegro* means, of course, the Cheerful Man, but he proves to be as far from wanton gaiety, whatever the reel of abstractions at the beginning, as *II Penseroso*, the Pensive or Contemplative Man, is far from melancholia. Critics have not agreed whether the poems balance day versus night as in *Proslusion I*, or two different persons (such as Diodati and Milton), or two moods in one person, or offer a debate between two ways of life, with Milton preferring the latter (as length, at least, would indicate). The best illustration to accompany the poems, both of which “unsphere/ The spirit of Plato,” whose idealizing influence lasts until Milton’s marriage, is the “Onslow” portrait, in the National Portrait Gallery, of the ruffed author at twenty-one: the delicate aristocratic face comes to us in a believable way for the last time without suffering or distortion.

After receiving his M.A., July 3, 1632 (his B.A. had been won March 26, 1629), Milton left Cambridge to go into rural retreat with his father at Hammersmith-Horton for a period of private study and preparation for his calling that was to last six years and be succeeded by the grand tour of the Continent. It was fortunate that the poet had for a father a man of means and culture (one sonnet of his survives) and understanding, whose qualms about the apparent idleness of his elder son (while the younger was diligently pursuing the law) could be smoothed by addressing him one hundred twenty hexameters, “*Ad Patrem*” (To his Father), that pointed out that the musician and the poet shared Phoebus between them. Milton did not earn a penny until he was thirty-one, but in the country he followed “*L'Allegro*” and “*II Penseroso*” with “*Arcades*” and “*Comus*” and “*Lycidas*.” He kept notes on a vast and systematic program of reading that helped to make him the most erudite of the English poets, rivaled perhaps only by Southey. In the Renaissance the poet was one who knew: there was not the modern invariable dichotomy between “knowing” and “making,” between the scholar and the creative writer. Milton had grandly proclaimed in his Seventh *Proslusion* his Baconian intention of taking all knowledge for his province. However, for his “tardy moving” he was put on the defensive, as by a friend who inquired why he did not join the ministry and charged him with “too much love of learning.”

“*Arcades*” and “*Comus*” belong to the genre of masques, mythological court entertainments involving song and dance and costumes, of which Ben Jonson wrote thirty-six. “*Arcades*” (which means Dwellers in Arcadia, the district in central Peloponnesus associated with pastoral, as in Sir Philip Sidney’s romance, *Arcadia*) consists of three songs and a recitative in twenty-nine heroic couplets in honor of the Countess Dowager of Derby at Harefield, ten miles from Horton. This lady, whom Spenser had also praised, was the stepmother and mother-in-law of John Egerton, Viscount Brackley, who became Earl of Bridgewater in 1617 and commissioned “*Comus*” in 1634 for Michaelmas night, September 29, in honor of his installation as Lord President of Wales. The future Puritan was moving in high circles, although it is not known whether he was present for that first performance, at Ludlow Castle in Shropshire, of a piece the fame of which redounded so that Henry Lawes (who composed the music for its songs) had to have it printed (1637): “although not openly acknowledged by the author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely and so much desired, that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view.” Adapting from the Circe myth, *A Mask* (it was named for its villain, whose Greek name means revelry, only after Milton’s death) is a paean to chastity, a topic with which its author was restively and increasingly concerned up to 1642. Where the typical masque was light and short, this one unwinds for a thousand lines, mostly of blank verse (Milton’s first, and, except for translations, his last before *Paradise Lost*), with arguments so serious that they were cut for the actual performance. Sir Henry Wotton, who was Provost of Eton, wrote handsomely: “I should much commend the tragical part, if the lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Doric delicacy in your songs and odes, whereunto I must plainly confess to have seen yet nothing parallel in our language.”

“*Lycidas*,” dated in manuscript November 1637, was another commissioned poem. It commemorates, as everyone knows, “a learned friend, unfortunately drowned,” Edward King (1612—37), the son of a civil officer in Dublin, Sir John King, of an English family. With his older brother, Roger, Edward King had entered Christ’s College sixteen months after Milton, after tuition by the famous schoolmaster Thomas Farnaby. On June 10, 1630, King was awarded by royal mandate a fellowship to which Milton, three years his senior, had a superior claim. Milton was at Hammersmith before King took his M.A., July 1633. Besides being a Tutor and Fellow in Christ’s, King served as prelector, 1634—35, while qualifying for the Church. During the long vacation of 1637 he arranged to visit his friends and relatives in Dublin, including his and Milton’s first tutor, Chappell (of unpleasant memory), who was serving there as provost of Trinity College. He made

his will nine days before setting sail. The ship had not been long out of Chester when, as the memorial volume's Latin prose preface says, it "struck on a rock, was stove in by the shock; he, while the other passengers were busy in vain about their mortal lives, having fallen on his knees, and breathing a life which was immortal, in the act of prayer going down with the vessel, rendered up his soul to God August 10, 1637, aged twenty-five." King's alma mater decided on a collection of elegies, perhaps in rivalry to Oxford's *Jonsonus Virbius: or the Memory of Ben Jonson Revived*, 1638, and of course Milton was applied to and in fact given the place of honor, for "Lycidas," signed just with his initials, closes the volume, as if it were well understood that the final and definitive word had been said. Preceding were twelve other pieces in English, of no merit, and twenty-three in Latin and Greek, and the whole was issued from the press in 1638 under the title *Iusta Edouardo King naufrago, ab Amicis maerentibus* (Rites to Edward King, drowned by shipwreck, from his grieving friends). King and Milton must have been well acquainted while at college together, although the friendship was not the same as with Diodati. King's surviving Latin ventures into verse, most of them obstetric pieces on royal births, showed little promise that he would ever "build the lofty rhyme." However, Milton's possible lack of deep personal grief on this occasion and King's demonstrable lack of poetic ability did nothing to spoil Milton's primary inspiration that a poet (and a priest, a good shepherd) had died an untimely death and must be greatly mourned.

By the time this volume was published Milton had left Horton for "fresh woods and pastures new"—a fifteen-month Continental tour that took him to France, Italy, and Geneva, and was the crown of his long and elaborate education. Accompanied by a manservant, and aided by references and linguistic facility, he again moved in high circles, starting with Lord Scudamore, Charles I's ambassador to Paris, who "gave me a card of introduction to the learned Hugo Grotius, at that time ambassador from the queen of Sweden [Christina] to the French court." In Italy, where he spent the greater part of his time, the gifted young man was received by a cardinal, Galileo, the librarian at the Vatican, a Neapolitan nobleman who had befriended Tasso and Marini, and sundry belle-lettrists who invited him to read his Latin poetry at their literary clubs and praised it extravagantly. A little talent went a long way in that twilight time of the Italian Renaissance, and there was no end of mutual backslapping among hopelessly minor talents; still, Milton was glad enough to print as preface to the Latin section of his 1645 poems the versified "testimonia" of Salsilli, Selvaggi, Francini, Dati, and Manso. Two of these were addressed poems by the visitor, Salsilli in sickness, and Manso, Marquis of Villa, in return for hospitality, and other literati figured in surviving correspondence.

After journeying from Rome to Naples in January 1639 in the company of an eremite friar who introduced him to Manso, Milton recalled (in his *Defensio Secunda*) that the latter proved "most friendly: for he guided me himself through the different parts of the city and the palace of the viceroy, and came more than once to visit me at my inn. On my leaving Naples he gravely apologized for not showing me still more attention, alleging that although it was what he wished above all things, it was not in his power in that city, because I had not thought proper to be more close in the matter of religion." Milton's stout Protestantism is also the only regret in Manso's two-line epigram, repeating the old Anglus (Englishman)—Angelus (angel) pun of Gregory the Great. Close thoughts, "i pensieri stretti," were exactly what the diplomat Wotton had advised, but one of Milton's character and upbringing had to draw a line between courtesy and hypocrisy, just as he could not but entertain mixed feelings on contemplating Rome itself—the seat of civilization *and* the residence of the whore of Babylon. About his second visit to Rome he had a melodramatic tale to tell. "While I was on my way back to Rome, some merchants informed me that the English Jesuits had formed a plot against me if I returned to Rome, because I had spoken too freely about religion; for it was a rule which I laid down to myself in those places never to be the first to begin any conversation on religion, but if any questions were put to me concerning my faith, to declare it without any reserve or fear. I nevertheless returned to Rome. I took no steps to conceal either my person or my character, and for about the space of two months I again openly defended, as I had done before, the reformed religion in the very metropolis of popery. By the favour of God, I got safe back to Florence, where I was received with as much affection as if I had returned to my native country." *Areopagitica* scores a point apropos of the Florentine interview with the latest person to be referred to in *Paradise Lost*. "I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old, a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought." But Catholicism did not interfere with the poet's obeisance to beauty wherever he found it. Thus he addressed the diva Leonora Baroni three Latin epigrams of almost impious praise: the first declares that God or the Holy Spirit speaks in her voice.

While planning to journey on to Sicily and Greece, Milton was led to turn homeward by "the melancholy tidings" of pending civil war. He made his way back in leisurely enough fashion in the spring of 1639, stopping at Lucca, Venice, Lake Lemano, Geneva. Lucca in Tuscany would have

been of special interest as the ancestral home of his best friend, Charles Diodati. That friend, alas, after entering his father's profession of physician, had died in August 1638 at the same age as Milton was when he wrote "Lycidas." Life had but too well imitated literature. The poet probably first got the news at Geneva, from the uncle Giovanni Diodati, a theologian and translator of the Bible into Italian and French.

This loss hit home so hard that the guise of a Latin pastoral was what the surviving friend, on his return, chose for its expression: he put it at a distance in the most formal way, including a reiterated choral line in which the sheep seventeen times are bid to go home unfed. Significant is the ending of "Epitaphium Damonis," in which Diodati (Damon) is translated to the pure ether that, dying unmarried, he deserves. By his youth without stain he has earned the heavenly rewards of those "which were not defiled with women; for they are virgins" (Rev. xiv, 4).

With this poem of 1640 the first period of Milton's life came to a close, a period of preparation and innocence and perfection in little. Twenty years in the public arena now ensued. From 1641 to 1660, from *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England* to *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, he exchanged (in the words of his fourth pamphlet) "a calm and pleasing solitariness fed with cheerful and confident thoughts" for "a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes." Several of the early pamphlets make promise of poetry: "Readers, as I may one day hope to have ye in a still time, when there shall be no chiding." But it looked as if utopia had to come first. And utopia was dilatory.

Settling down in a "pretty garden house" in Aldersgate Street, Milton, commencing with his two nephews, took up as a private occupation tutoring. As the clouds of civil war gathered, the first of the troubles on which, as a private citizen, he decided to let himself be heard was the need for ecclesiastical reform. The hungry sheep looked up and were not fed: so he had already concluded in "Lycidas," at a time when Scotland rose against the attempted imposition by Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury, of the Anglican Prayer Book on a kirk that had long been satisfied with Knox's Book of Common Order. Laud took note in his Diary of a charge "pasted on the Cross in Cheapside, that the arch-wolf of Canterbury had his hand in persecuting the saints." The saints were Puritans and Presbyterians, the former named for their desire to purge the English church of corrupt and Romish practices, which appeared to be on the increase under the Stuarts: the clergy were "wooden, illiterate, or contemptible," lazy and "tavern-haunting," the communion table was railed in and icons and kissing of the cross abounded, and confession was allowed, and violation of the sanctity of the Lord's Day encouraged. The archbishop had been offered a cardinal's hat. True Protestants were being harried out of the land—to Holland and America. A proud and tyrannous hierarchy put down individual opposition through the Court of High Commission, the ecclesiastical equivalent of the dreaded Star Chamber that pilloried and trimmed the ears of such doughty antiprelatical martyrs as Prynne, a lawyer, Burton, a clergyman, and Bastwick, a doctor.

The Long Parliament, which had been meeting since November 1640, was turning to questions of church government, and a Root and Branch Bill abolishing archbishops and bishops was up for consideration when Milton made his debut, anonymously, "amidst. . . deep and retired thoughts," as a pamphleteer in May 1641, with *Of Reformation touching Church Discipline in England*, and the *Causes that hitherto have hindered it: two books written to a friend*. The "friend" may be taken as Thomas Young, the author's former tutor, who in collaboration with four other Puritan divines was arguing in print with Bishop Joseph Hall and now welcomed a vigorous and scholarly ally, who followed this reasoned historical review with *Of Prelatical Episcopacy*, *Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnuus* (a pseudonym formed by the initials of the five collaborators), *The Reason of Church Government Urged against Prelaty*, and *An Apology for Smectymnuus*.

What did the world of literature lose by a great poet's grimy descent into that arena where victory was not to be had over the adversary without much "dust and heat," if indeed victory was ever to be had, as obscure citations were answered by countercitations, dubious texts were endlessly wrangled over, and history was written to order? The argument, short on light but not on heat, waxed personal, with the Hall party claiming that their opponent, having been "vomited out" of the University, was looking for a "rich widow" to mend his fortunes. To these charges there was no reply but passionate autobiography and ever rougher language, lightened by jests about chamber pots and the stench of the episcopal foot.

Milton knew he was demeaning his genius. "I should not choose this manner of writing, wherein, knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand."

But the poetic vein, the right hand, was evidently not ready, anyway, to flow freely to produce a large work. Milton did try, and he had more leisure in this twenty-year period than is generally realized. Between 1639 and 1641, and from 1645 to 1648, for instance, he entered no public frays and so, presumably, could have written poetry, if other conditions had been right. He kept a

notebook in which he jotted down ninety-nine subjects for tragedies. The theme of *Paradise Lost* heads the list, since the Old Testament is raked through in order, but the brevity and miscellaneousness of most of the entries betray desperation or mere diligence. What could ever have been made (or so we ask, knowing that nothing ever was made) of “The Quails” (Num. xi) or “The Murmurers” (Num. xiv)? A number of topics are brutal or obscene: “Comazontes or the Benjaminites or the Rioters” (Judg. xix), “David Adulterous,” “Moabitides or Phineas,” “Tamar” (2 Sam. xiii), “Solomon Gynaecocratomenus” (woman-governed).

What Milton had to go through in order to write *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes* can only be conjectured, but it is superficial to follow the well-known nineteenth-century biographer Mark Pattison in treating the period 1641–60 as years of deplorable waste, when Milton gave to party what was meant for mankind. “Our wish for Milton is that he should have placed himself from the beginning above party.” To which Richard Garnett properly retorted, “We think, on the contrary, that such a mere man of letters as Pattison wishes that Milton had been could never have produced a *Paradise Lost*.” Whether in prose or in verse, in *Paradise Lost* or the *History of Britain* or the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton thought of himself as the counselor and teacher of his countrymen. He told a well-wisher in 1654: “I am far from thinking that I have spent my toil, as you seem to hint, on matters of inferior consequence.” He included *Of Education* in the 1673 edition of his shorter poems. There are many connections between his prose and his verse, and Poe, for one, dramatically drew attention to the considerable stylistic merits of the former by preferring it to the latter. The life Milton led, political and domestic, the suffering and turmoil he underwent, the causes he won and lost, entered the long poems of his last period. Nor did he leave behind the equipment he had sharpened in the arena—his scholarship, his gift for satire, his passion.

Meanwhile this good citizen and schoolmaster, having issued the fifth and last of his antiprelatical tracts, having as he there wistfully says “spent and tired out almost a whole youth” in “wearisome labours and studious watchings,” deemed it high time to get married, that spring of 1642. Edward Phillips, the elder nephew, tells the scant story of the sudden union of the thirty-three-year-old poet with a girl half his age who belonged to Royalist gentry and whose father owed his father five hundred pounds that had gone unpaid for fifteen years (a far cry from a “rich widow” she!). “About Whitsuntide it was, or a little after, that he took a journey into the country, nobody about him certainly knowing the reason, or that it was any more than a journey of recreation; after a month’s stay, home he returns a married man, that went out a bachelor, his wife being Mary, the eldest daughter of Mr. Richard Powell, then a justice of peace, of Forresthill, near Shotover in Oxfordshire, some few of her nearest relations accompanying the bride to her new habitation; which, by reason the father nor anybody else were yet come, was able to receive them; where the feasting held for some days in celebration of the nuptials, and for entertainment of the bride’s friends. At length they took their leave, and, returning to Forresthill, left the sister behind, probably not much to her satisfaction, as appeared by the sequel. By that time she had for a month or thereabout led a philosophical life (after having been used to a great house, and much company and joviality); her friends, possibly incited by her own desire, made earnest suit by letter to have her company the remaining part of the summer, which was granted, on condition of her return at the time appointed, Michaelmas, or thereabout.”

Whitsuntide had been May 29. But Mary Powell Milton did not come back at Michaelmas, September 29. Another early biographer rounds out the tale. “Nor though he sent several pressing invitations could he prevail with her to return, till about [three] years after, when Oxford was surrendered (the nighness of her father’s house to that garrison having for the most part of the meantime hindered any communication between them), she of her own accord came, and submitted to him, pleading that her mother had been the inciter of her to that frowardness.”

This authority, the Anonymous Biographer, makes a connection with Milton’s thinking about divorce, “the lawfulness and expedience of” which “had upon full consideration and reading good authors been formerly his opinion, and the necessity of justifying himself now concurring with the opportunity, acceptable to him, of instructing others in a point of so great concern.” That deserted husband, having no assurance that his disaffected wife was ever coming back, published no less than four tracts on the new center of his interest: *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*; *The Judgment of Martin Bucer, Concerning Divorce*; *Tetrachordon: Expositions upon the four chief places in Scripture which treat of marriage, or Nullities in Marriage*; *Colasterion: A Reply to a Nameless Answer against “The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.”*

This ever bolder thinker argued for divorce for incompatibility, grounds then utterly unknown. He achieved a succès de scandale, even being attacked by a preacher before Parliament. Mrs. Sadleir reproved Roger Williams for daring to recommend such an author: “For Milton’s book that you desire I should read, if I be not mistaken, that is he that has wrote a book of the lawfulness of divorce, and, if report says true, he had, at that time, two or three wives living. This, perhaps, were good doctrine in New England, but it is most abominable in Old England.” This may be a reflection

of the rumor that Milton was at one time thinking of taking the backward law into his own hands by marrying a Miss Davis and thus presenting his first wife—and an unsympathetic Parliament—with a *fait accompli*. Such a rumor, true or not, may have hastened Mary Milton's return.

Also by then she had had an opportunity to see which side was winning the Civil War. The years of the publication of the divorce tracts, 1643–45, were the years of the military conflict between King and Parliament. At first the Royalists had the edge, but the organization and superb generalship and cavalry maneuvers of Cromwell's New Model Army enabled the Roundheads to win decisive victories at Marston Moor (1644) and Naseby (1645). Charles was forced to surrender at Newark in May 1646.

Meanwhile Milton, having begun with championing ecclesiastical liberty, was led to consider other branches of domestic liberty besides marriage—namely education and freedom of the press. On the invitation of a philanthropist and reformer named Samuel Hartlib he gave his rather formidable views *Of Education* (published June 1644). Two quotations are outstanding. "The end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by gaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the nearest by possessing our souls of true virtue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection." "I call therefore a complete and generous education that which fits a man to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war." But the program of learning at the proposed academy—which was to be a combination of school and college—was such as only young Miltons could have been expected to encompass. This pamphlet was followed in November by the now famous but then ignored *Areopagitica: A Speech of Mr. John Milton for the Liberty of Unlicenced Printing*, objecting to the new censorship that Parliament had instituted after abolishing the Star Chamber, a censorship prior to publication that had made it necessary for the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* to be issued unlicensed and unregistered.

During his prose period the poet kept his hand in with occasional sonnets, including a disillusioned "tailed" sonnet "On the New Forcers of Conscience under the Long Parliament." He began with one that bore the deleted title "On his Door when the City expected an Assault" (November 1642), and by the time he had completed fifteen others he had exhibited a considerable range—complimentary, admonitory, satirical, memorial, pleasantly social, deeply personal. At the end of 1645, after, with his wife's return, taking up residence in a larger house in the Barbican, he saw through the press a collected edition of his English and Latin poems. The publisher was Humphrey Moseley, who persisted in specializing in poetry and pure literature in a time of troubles when political pamphlets and sermons were "more vendible." He now called the attention of the discriminating reader to "as true a birth as the Muses have brought forth since our famous Spenser wrote." The little volume has long been rarer than the first editions of *Paradise Lost*. The diarists Pepys and Evelyn were among the early purchasers, and a presentation copy to Oxford got lost; the poet sent another, and with it an eighty-seven-line ode to Rous, the Bodleian librarian, that was destined (except for a couple of epigrams) to be the last of his Latin poems. The portrait of the author that served as the frontispiece of this small octavo was so badly done that Milton took advantage of the bungling engraver's barbarous ignorance by having him inscribe underneath four lines of Greek iambs that made fun of his ineptness.

Nothing is known about Milton's first marriage after his wife lived with him again except that she bore him three daughters (and a son John that died in infancy) and died in childbirth of Deborah, May 5, 1652, by which time the poet was blind. The first two daughters were Anne, a cripple, born July 29, 1646, and Mary, born October 25, 1648. Milton did not get along with his mother-in-law, and it must have been a strain when his wife's family, sequestered from their estate with the fall of Oxford (June 1646) moved in on him. The Barbican house saw, early in 1647, the death of both his father-in-law and his father. On hearing that spring from his old Florentine friend Dati, he sent him a *cri de coeur*: "a something heavier creeps in upon me, to which I am accustomed in very frequent grievings over my own lot: the sense, namely, that those whom the mere necessity of neighbourhood, or something else of a useless kind, has closely conjoined with me, whether by accident or by the tie of law, they are the persons, though in no other respect commendable, who sit daily in my company, weary me, nay, by heaven, all but plague me to death whenever they are jointly in the humour for it, whereas those whom habits, disposition, studies, had so handsomely made my friends, are now almost all denied me, either by death or by most unjust separation of place, and are so for the most part snatched from my sight that I have to live well-nigh in a perpetual solitude."

In 1648 "the false North," as the sonnet "On the Lord General Fairfax at the Siege of Colchester" puts it, displayed "her broken league," when the Scots changed sides and took up arms for Charles in return for his promise to establish Presbyterianism as the sole form of church in England. Cromwell won at Preston, and at last the difficult decision was made to try the King, who had long been playing one faction against another, for treason. A purged Parliament—the so-called

“Rump”—gave this legal sanction. At this juncture Milton composed his first political pamphlet, *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates: Proving that it is Lawful and hath been held so through all Ages, for any, who have the Power, to call to account a Tyrant or Wicked King*. . . . Written during the trial, it appeared two weeks after the King was beheaded outside his palace of Whitehall, an act that forced a groan from even the most republican of the witnesses. The second of the Stuart kings bravely met the same fate as Laud in 1645 and that proud tyrannical agent the Earl of Strafford in 1641.

In the words of the nephew of Milton, “for this his last treatise, reviving the fame of other things he had formerly published, being more and more taken notice of for his excellency of style and depth of judgement, he was courted into the service of this new Commonwealth” by being invited, one month after publication, to serve as Secretary for the Foreign Tongues. This involved being responsible for despatches in the diplomatic language of the day, Latin.

Milton’s English was soon called into play again too, for the body of the executed king was scarcely cold when an apology, *Eikon Basilike, the Portraiture of his Sacred Majesty in his Solitudes and Sufferings*, appeared in his name and achieved enormous underground circulation —“there’s such divinity doth hedge a king”—going through about fifty editions the first twelve months. *Eikon Basilike* (the King’s Book or King’s Image) proved such a potent instrument in stirring up sympathy for the royal martyr (who was shown handsomely at his prayers in the frontispiece—by the same engraver who had dealt badly by Milton three years before) that the Council of State gave the order for Milton’s *Eikonoklastes* (the Image-breaker). The new official went about this assignment with no great rush of enthusiasm, observing in his first sentence, “To descant on the misfortunes of a person fallen from so high a dignity, who hath also paid his final debt both to nature and his faults, is neither of itself a thing commendable nor the intention of this discourse.” The same author was also commissioned to do *Observations upon the Articles of Peace with the Irish Rebels*.

Thus, after having moved into official quarters in Whitehall, Milton, despite failing health and eyesight, laboured valiantly for the republican regime, writing state letters in Latin and taking on, by assignment, one opponent after another. The most famous internationally of these was not the late King, who, most scholars agree, had little to do with the composition of *Eikon Basilike*: at the Restoration Bishop John Gauden claimed the honor (and rewards) of its authorship. The dangerous new foe was Claudius Salmasius, a French scholar and polymath, who, for one hundred jacobuses from the King’s son, blackened the new regime at home and abroad with his *Defensio Regia Pro Carolo I* (Royal Defense in behalf of Charles I), some five hundred pages of vituperation and pedantry. Milton spent his remaining eyesight in preparing his voluminous, point-by-point reply, *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (Defense of the English People).

Whatever the modern reader’s disappointment in what seems fantastically abusive, legalistic, outrageously personal, dully grammatical, controversy—Hobbes professed to be unable to decide between the opponents whose language was best, or whose arguments were worst—the learned looked on with fascination at this battle between titans of scholarship in an age that respected scholarship and cared about such a question—as Dr. Johnson still did a century later—as to whether “vapulo,” which has a passive meaning, could be used as a gerundive. However, Johnson concluded contemptuously, “No man forgets his original trade: the rights of nations, and of kings, sink into questions of grammar, if grammarians discuss them.”

Milton’s attitude, needless to say, was different. He alluded in a sonnet to the “noble task/ Of which all Europe talks from side to side.” He felt the game was worth the candle—the last gleam of his light. He was satisfied to “have prosperously, God so favouring me, defended the public cause of this Commonweal to foreigners”—who could never read his English works. A modern commentator perhaps captures his attitude when he says, “In some true if incomplete sense he was delivering to the world, in his first and second Defence of the English People, that epic ‘doctrinal and exemplary to a nation’ to which he had early dedicated his powers.”

Salmasius was basking at the court of Christina, enjoying the favor that the Swedish queen regularly accorded scholars and artists, when, in the spring of 1651, Milton’s reply fell on him. If Keats, as Byron thought, was killed by bad reviews, Salmasius did not live long after this either, though against the charge that he died of shame at being worsted in Latin, law, history, logic, and invective is his lifelong record of poor health: the Spa waters (he could no longer face Christina) were perhaps what finished him. (He and Milton were the same age when they died.) He threatened an answer that he never completed (a fragment was published at the Restoration).

What is interesting is the contrast. There but for the grace of poetry and integrity and sturdy good sense, Milton might have gone. There was no lack of energy in either: Salmasius published more than fifty books in such diverse fields as theology, medicine, jurisprudence, and botany, and was particularly eminent as a classical editor and commentator. Milton made a respectful reference to him in the *Reason of Church Government*. In many ways Salmasius was an anti-Milton before he

was aware of the poet. Salmasius also began with an interest in belles-lettres, but his father wanted him to study law, and his father prevailed (compare “Ad Patrem”). However, instead of writing the wistful lines, though he did do some Latin poetry—“Were it not better done, as others use,/ To sport with Amaryllis in the shade?”—young Salmasius frankly sported. Both he and Milton married in their middle thirties—and lived to regret it. He and Milton entered the episcopal controversy at the same time (1641), but the one betrayed—for a sizable fee—the principles he had enunciated, so that Milton was able to quote Salmasius versus Salmasius. Salmasius, whose profoundest faculty was his memory, was giddy with his fantastic load of learning; Milton felt within himself the dichotomy of creative writer and critic or scholar, which he found various ways of seeking to mend.

But in 1652, if Salmasius was sulking in disrepute, Milton, awaiting his promised reply (but attacked by others instead), was blind and a widower, bereft of an infant son and with three small daughters to bring up. His blindness had come gradually over a nine-year period, the left eye failing first. His works contain many references to it, most famously two passages in *Paradise Lost* (iii, 1—55; vii, 24—30) and the sonnet that begins, “When I consider how my light is spent” and ends, “They also serve who only stand and wait.” He sent a friend, who had held out hopes of treatment by a famous Parisian specialist, a detailed clinical account, but modern students of the subject, including ophthalmologists, do not agree on a diagnosis. His enemies—the enemies of the government he had wielded his pen for—saw it as a punishment from Heaven. The literary critic is left to wonder about its influence on his three long poems, which in compensation develop the aural over the visual. Is it accidental, or dictated solely by subject, that *Paradise Lost*, that microcosm, that “little world made cunningly,” depends for most of its effects—including the moral—on the alternation of light and darkness? The last ocular perceptions Milton had were flashes of light.

In 1654 Milton published a work shorter and of better quality than his first Defense, namely his Second Defense, *Defensio Secunda*. Salmasius had defaulted and died; his confuter, who had been reserving his strength, could now attend to another opponent, the author of *Regii Sanguinis Clamor*, The Cry of the Royal Blood to Heaven. The question was, as with *Eikon Basilike*, who was the author? Milton took it to be Alexander More or Morus, who in fact was merely the editor; the true author, Peter Du Moulin the younger, “looked on in silence, and not without a soft chuckle, at seeing my bantling laid at another man’s door, and the blind and furious Milton fighting and slashing the air, like the hoodwinked horse-combatants in the old circus, not knowing by whom he was struck and whom he struck in return.” The Second Defense is witty at the expense of More, a Greek professor and theologian with a scandalous private life (including an affair with Salmasius’ servantmaid Pontia) that Milton relentlessly ferrets out, sparing no punning amorous detail. But the enduring interest of the *Defensio Secunda* lies in what is serious—autobiography and the encomia of the new leaders and their having built for freedom (though that foundation was already slipping, as Milton gave warning signs of realizing). The form was oratorical, like *Areopagitica*. In the words of Hanford, “In the *First Defence* Milton’s ardor is in part factitious; he is more the controversialist, using the accepted weapons of the day. In the *Second Defence*, he is John Milton himself, rising in wrath and dignity against the enemies of truth.”

Milton also rose in wrath in one of the greatest of his sonnets, “On the Late Massacre in Piedmont,” on the occasion of the treacherous slaughter, on April 24, 1655, of a pristine Protestant sect, the Waldenses or Vaudois, that had been living under a toleration treaty in northwest Italy. The fourteen lines are a veritable onomatopoeia of grief and rage. The writer said some of the same things in Latin, as Cromwell promptly responded to the call for help and sent a special ambassador and was in fact ready to go to war.

Meanwhile Milton continued his pen-war with More, issuing *Pro Se Defensio*, Defense in his Own Behalf, but he was gradually obliged—or inclined—to be less active in matters relating to the state and his salary was reduced, as younger men—eventually the poet Andrew Marvell—were called on to assist him. He worked now on his *History of Britain* (up to the Norman conquest), published 1670, and the heretical treatise *De Doctrina Christiana* (On the Christian Doctrine) that first saw the light in 1825 and casts doubt on the orthodoxy of *Paradise Lost*.

He made a love match with a woman twenty years younger and whom there is no reason to believe he had ever seen—much of the pathos of the moving sonnet “On his Deceased Wife” depends on this. Katherine Woodcock became his bride November 12, 1656, only to die less than fifteen months later following the birth of a daughter named after her, and the next month the infant was buried too. These are the bare facts of a marriage that the sonnet “Methought I saw my late espoused Saint” (it would be his last sonnet) indicates to have been as happy as it was brief. “But O, as to embrace me she inclin’d,/ I wak’d, she fled, and day brought back my night.”

There was nothing to do now but to hear of the latest turns of events with increasing concern and start *Paradise Lost*. Cromwell, who had become virtually a dictator (though a reluctant one), “King Oliver,” had died (the Latin Secretary marched in his funeral procession), and his son, Richard, proved an incompetent successor. The seeds were sown for the Restoration. Milton’s countrymen

were “backsliding.” He gave them last admonitions, both on the ecclesiastical and on the political front. In 1659 he issued *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes and Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church*. A year later, after General Monck with his troops had entered London and was about to give the necessary nod of approval to the reestablishment of the monarchy, Milton pleaded for a perpetual “grand council” “of ablest men” instead, in *The Ready and Easy Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*. In April appeared an enlarged edition of these “last words of our expiring liberty,” not so much with the vain thought of stemming the tide “as to confirm them who yield not.” There the upbringing of Charles II is glanced at forebodingly, and as it turned out correctly: “What liberty of conscience can we then expect of others, far worse principled from the cradle, trained up and governed by popish and Spanish counsels, and on such depending hitherto for subsistence?” The new king did in fact become a pensioner of Louis XIV.

The second edition of *The Ready and Easy Way* prudently omits name of printer or stationer, but the initials of the author—who was taking his life into his hands—are boldly imprinted on the title page for all to see, with a motto that indicates that, Monck himself being despaired of, the good citizens themselves are now exhorted (but not the mob, the vulgar multitude, whom this believer in the elite distrusted as much as an absolute monarch).

Charles II, restored in May, left it to the Convention Parliament to decide who, such as regicides, should be excepted from the general amnesty he had proclaimed in the Declaration of Breda before he landed. It was touch-and-go whether Milton would suffer capital punishment. Perhaps the damage he had done—or sought to do—was not so known to his judges as he, going now into hiding, believed; moreover, “our author had many good friends to intercede for him both in the Privy Council and in the House of Commons”—e.g., Marvell. That visitation, his blindness, which was much mocked during this period by pamphleteers, may have been thought punishment enough, along with certain heavy financial losses he faced. In June the *Defensio (Prima)* and *Eikonoklastes* were ordered burned, and a warrant went out for the author’s arrest, but he could not then be located. A dozen victims went to the gallows ultimately, including Milton’s heroic friend Sir Harry Vane, one of history’s noblest figures and a great champion of liberty (he had been elected governor of Massachusetts at twenty-two, but, like Roger Williams, proved too liberal for that colony and moved out), to whom the poet (who, by the way, had studied Dutch with Williams) had addressed a sonnet that was published as part of an obituary in 1662. The bones of Cromwell and other already dead associates were “dragged to Tyburn, there to hang for some time, and afterwards be buried under the gallows.” Milton was found and taken into custody, but ordered released December 15, 1660. Whereupon he indignantly protested to the Commons (through Marvell) that the sergeant-at-arms had charged him excessive fees during his imprisonment. Nothing is more characteristic of the man than that he thus insisted on his rights, when an ordinary mortal would have been glad to slink away free, though not scot-free, free and alive. Horrible remnants were all around him, including, at the top of Westminster Hall, the grinning head of John Bradshaw, formerly President of the Council of State, who may have been his cousin and who, before he, like Cromwell, frustrated the avengers by dying too soon, had named the poet in his will for ten pounds. Under date of October 13, 1660, Pepys made a famous entry about the demeanor of one of the living victims: “I went out to Charing Cross, to see Major-general Harrison hanged, drawn, and quartered; which was done there, he looking as cheerful as any man could do in that condition. He was presently cut down, and his head and heart shown to the people, at which there was great shouts of joy. It is said that he said that he was sure to come shortly at the right hand of Christ to judge them that now had judged him, and that his wife do expect his coming again. Thus it was my chance to see the King beheaded at White Hall, and to see the first blood shed in revenge for the blood of the King at Charing Cross.”

Out of the ruins and out of the darkness Milton brought *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*, and *Samson Agonistes*—a long epic, a short epic, and a Greek tragedy, all without rivals in the language. It was a miracle of the spirit—of, he intimated, the Holy Spirit, for he was strong and insistent in his belief in the sacredness of his inspiration.

The Anonymous Biographer tells about his habits of composition. “And he waking early (as is the use of temperate men), had commonly a good stock of verses ready against his amanuensis came; which if it happened to be later than ordinary, he would complain, saying, ‘he wanted to be milked.’ The evenings he likewise spent in reading some choice poets, by way of refreshment after the day’s toil, and to store his fancy against morning.” This last statement is confirmed by *Paradise Lost*, iii, 29 ff.

According to Aubrey, *Paradise Lost* was finished in 1663. In any case it was finished by the fall of 1665, when the Quaker Ellwood saw the complete manuscript. It may not have been easy to find a publisher for it; it would not be easy now. It did not come out until 1667.

In that year of possible completion (1663), Milton entered upon his third and last marriage, a *mariage de convenance*, February 24, with Elizabeth Minshull, some thirty years younger. The

blind widower was having trouble with his daughters—according to the testimony of a maidservant, Mary said, “if she could hear of his death, that was something,” and “his said children had made away some of his books and would have sold the rest of his books to the dunghill woman.” The household needed a mistress, and a physician friend supplied a young kinswoman for the purpose. All that is known of her up to her last days—she reached ninety (no risky childbirths for her!)—in her native Nantwich points to her having made a satisfactory wife (though not a good stepmother—perhaps it was impossible to be both) in a marriage that could not have begun very romantically, despite the fact that her hair, like Eve’s, was gold. In his nuncupative (oral) will, Milton called her “my loving wife.” As for the daughters by the first marriage, they may have been going through just the usual adolescent rebellion. It is a myth perpetuated by a bad painting at the New York Public Library that the three of them were depended upon as amanuenses of *Paradise Lost*—Milton had professionals to help him, and friends who were glad to help him for nothing or for what they could hear from him. We do have a telling bon mot (which was or became a proverb) when the question of his daughters’ knowing another language came up: “One tongue is enough for a woman.” In sum, our author, however radical, was not a feminist. He did call on two of his daughters to read to him in languages they did not understand.

The family moved to the father’s last London residence, “in the Artillery-walk leading to Bunhill Fields.” The only change was in the summer of 1665 when his young friend Ellwood found him a cottage at Chalfont St. Giles, twenty-three miles from London, as a refuge from the plague (till the beginning of 1666). That rustic place, still spared invasion by the main road, is the only one of Milton’s dozen residences that survives and can be visited. At the village manor had lived the family of Fleetwood, three of whom had signed Charles’s death warrant. Now their estates had been taken from them, and they scattered; Milton found no friends to welcome him on his arrival, for Ellwood, having had one of his Dissenter conflicts with the authorities, was in jail.

It is this Quaker who tells in his autobiography an anecdote about the composition of *Paradise Regained*, 2070 lines of blank verse in four books on the temptations of Jesus in the wilderness. Having been shown the manuscript of *Paradise Lost* at Chalfont St. Giles and encouraged to speak freely, he “pleasantly said to” the author, “‘Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost*, but what hast thou to say of *Paradise Found*?’ He made me no answer, but sat some time in a muse; then brake off that discourse, and fell upon another subject. After the sickness was over, and the city well cleansed, and become safely habitable again, he returned thither. And when afterwards I went to wait on him there (which I seldom failed of doing, whenever my occasions drew me to London), he showed me his second poem, called *Paradise Regained*, and in a pleasant tone said to me, ‘This is owing to you, for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had not thought of.’” A completion date of 1666 or 1667 is thus indicated. Milton held it back, however, waiting to see how *Paradise Lost* would fare. *Paradise Regained* was published with *Samson Agonistes* in 1671. Needless to say, modern critics look deeper than Ellwood for the poem’s inspiration, which may go back to the days when Milton was calling the Book of Job a brief epic (in *The Reason of Church Government*)—as St. Jerome had done—and to a desire to excel in all the principal forms. The shorter epic, Phillips was already reporting in 1694, was “generally censured to be much inferior to the other, though he could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him.” *Paradise Regained* is in a plain style in keeping with the asceticism of its hero and uninvitingness of its setting. It is a debate, with just two characters, Jesus and Satan. Nearly all dialogue, it has been called dramatic and even thought originally designed, perhaps, as a play. There are, however, appropriate outbursts of the virtuoso allusive Milton of yore—he had not lost his old powers. He was proving, as with *Samson Agonistes* (which pioneers with what amounts to free verse), his power to go on to other styles, and must have been impatient with those who expected him to sound always the same.

The former pedagogue also published textbooks. *Accidence Commenced*, a simplified Latin grammar, came out in 1669, and was followed by a Latin Logic in 1672. These are remarkable publications to follow *Paradise Lost* and precede an enlarged edition of the minor poems in 1673. Wordsworth in the sonnet commencing, “Milton! thou shouldst be living at this hour,” observed, “Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart,” but the sonnet concludes, with no less wonder, “and yet thy heart/ The lowliest duties on herself did lay.” Milton worked on many things during his lifetime, including a Latin dictionary. *A Brief History of Muscovia* was found and published after his death. So were his Letters of State—with the apology that they were interesting for their style. *Paradise Lost* having proved vendible—he received ultimately fifteen pounds for it (the equivalent of two thousand dollars in today’s money)—the booksellers sought him out for anything not too subversive he had lying around. To this is to be attributed the publication of his college oratorical exercises as an addition to his Familiar Letters, 1674: “to fill up the space and compensate for the paucity of the letters” (as the “Printer’s Preface to the Reader” candidly explains).

In that year, the last of his life, a second edition of *Paradise Lost* was called for; he made twelve books, a more epic number, out of the original ten by dividing Books vii and x, adding some necessary connecting lines. He also put out *A Declaration or Letters Patents of the Election of this Present King of Poland*. The year before, after thirteen years of silence as a pamphleteer, he shot a last fusillade with *Of True Religion*, his most anti-Romish tract, amid widespread fears that Charles II (that crypto-Catholic warned against in *The Ready and Easy Way*) was paving the way for popery with his Declaration of Indulgence suspending the penal statutes against Catholics and Dissenters; the latter indignantly declined toleration at the cost of its being granted to the former.

Thus the last years of a versatile teacher, who never retired and who barely reached retirement age, were busy and, after the departure of the daughters—they were “sent out to learn some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture, that are proper for women to learn, particularly embroideries in gold or silver”—outwardly calm. “Of a very cheerful humour,” noted Aubrey, “and only towards his later end he was visited with the gout spring and fall: he would be cheerful even in his goutfits and sing.” “He was visited much by learned: more than he did desire. . . . Foreigners came much to see him.” Dryden, the poet laureate, who had exclaimed over *Paradise Lost*, “This man cuts us all out, and the ancients too!” requested and received permission to make a rhymed “opera” of the epic. The resulting *State of Innocence and Fall of Man* is one of the curiosities of literary history and was part of a continuing controversy over blank verse versus rhyme.

Milton died around November 9, 1674, of “gout struck in.” “He died. . . with so little pain or emotion, that the time of his expiring was not perceived by those in the room.” He was buried “in the Church of St. Giles Cripplegate, being attended from his house to the church by several gentlemen then in town, his principal well-wishers and admirers.”

As with Shakespeare, Milton’s direct line soon died out, although the families of his brother and his sister have gone on into this century. His daughter Deborah Milton Clarke and his long-lived widow expired within a day or two of each other in August 1727. Dr. Johnson wrote a prologue for a benefit performance of “Comus” in 1750 for the poet’s granddaughter, Mrs. Elizabeth Foster. She, the last living direct descendant, lingered on poorly till 1754, thereby reaching the age of her grandfather, sixty-five.

—Edward Le Comte

PARADISE LOST

The primary source of *Paradise Lost* is the Bible with all its commentators (including the rabbinical) and expanders. It must be remembered that Milton had an audience that knew one book better than we know any book. One investigator has counted nine hundred thirteen references from the Old Testament and four hundred ninety from the New, but of course what the reader should be fresh on primarily is Genesis, i—iii, in the King James version (which Milton often quotes verbatim). The rebellion and battle in heaven indicated in Revelation, xii, 4, 7—9, and Isaiah, xiv, 12—15, had been fleshed out in many a patristic or poetical account by Milton's day.

The reader should also be fresh on Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid* as the prime epic models affecting the form and structure and even the story of *Paradise Lost*. It is better to know these two epics well, for the sometimes surprising recognitions that come, than to have merely a nodding acquaintance with the multifarious other influences that make Milton's poem the encyclopedia of allusions—biblical, geographic, mythological, classical, literary, historical, scientific—that it is.

One of its most useful cultural services today is to acquaint the reader, perhaps even the churchgoing reader, with Christian theology. One must beware, however, of concluding that Milton was what we should call a fundamentalist Christian: he had to seem to be, to function as a poet, since poetry is more happily built of the concrete than the abstract. Did he believe that Sin and Death, palpable shapes, built a palpable causeway from Hell to Earth? Was he sure of the location of Hell? Did he believe that Satan personally invented gunpowder and that angels ever wore armor? Is everything in his poem presented as gospel truth necessary to salvation? One gets perspective by asking parallel questions about the poems of Homer and Virgil, although there was always for Milton a sense in which he was embodying the truth, while the pagans dealt with "an empty dream" (vii, 39).

THE VERSE

THE measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin—rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame metre; graced indeed since by the use of some famous modern poets, carried away by custom, but much to their own vexation, hindrance, and constraint to express many things otherwise, and for the most part worse, than else they would have expressed them. Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rhyme both in longer and shorter works, as have also long since our best English tragedies, as a thing of itself, to all judicious ears, trivial and of no true musical delight; which consists only in apt numbers, fit quantity of syllables, and the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another, not in the jingling sound of like endings—a fault avoided by the learned ancients both in poetry and all good oratory. This neglect then of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it rather is to be esteemed an example set—the first in English—of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of riming.

BOOK I

THE ARGUMENT^o

The First Book proposes, first in brief, the whole subject—Man's disobedience, and the loss thereupon of Paradise, wherein he was placed; then touches the prime cause of his fall—the Serpent, or rather Satan in the Serpent; who, revolting from God, and drawing to his side many legions of Angels, was, by the command of God, driven out of Heaven, with all his crew, into the great Deep. Which action passed over, the Poem hastens into the midst of things, presenting Satan, with his Angels, now fallen into Hell—described here not in the Centre (for heaven and earth may be supposed as yet not made, certainly not yet accursed), but in a place of utter darkness, fitliest called Chaos. Here Satan, with his Angels lying on the burning lake, thunderstruck and astonished, after a certain space recovers, as from confusion; calls up him who, next in order and dignity, lay by him: they confer of their miserable fall. Satan awakens all his legions, who lay till then in the same manner confounded. They rise: their numbers; array of battle; their chief leaders named, according to the idols known afterwards in Canaan and the countries adjoining. To these Satan directs his speech; comforts them with hope yet of regaining Heaven; but tells them, lastly, of a new world and new kind of creature to be created, according to an ancient prophecy, or report, in Heaven—for that Angels were long before this visible creation was the opinion of many ancient Fathers. To find out the truth of this prophecy, and what to determine thereon, he refers to a full council. What his associates

The first issue of *Paradise Lost* did not have “The Argument” for each book—convenient summaries of the plot such as were customary with long or epic poems. The poet made the addition (which sometimes forms a supplement to the poem worth studying) “for the satisfaction of many that have desired it.”

thence attempt. Pandemonium, the palace of Satan, rises, suddenly built out of the Deep; the infernal Peers there sit in council.

OF Man's^o first disobedience and the fruit^o
Of that forbidden tree^o whose mortal taste^o
Brought death into the world and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man^o
Restore us and regain the blissful seat,
Sing, Heavenly Muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb^o or of Sinai didst inspire
That shepherd who first taught the chosen seed
In the beginning^o how the heavens and earth
Rose out of Chaos;^o or, if Sion hill

1-16 The first sentence is typical of the style of *Paradise Lost*— in syntax, in vocabulary, in multiple-choice allusiveness, and in “the sense variously drawn out from one verse into another.” The word order is Latin—object first, main verb held in reverse, with subordinate clauses suspended in between, or clustered afterwards. Where modern poetry aims to be colloquial, Milton stands on epic ceremony, aims for the exalted and magniloquent. 1 **Of Man's** Eve, formed from Adam's rib; cf. viii, 465 ff., 495 ff. **fruit** not to be taken literally only, but also in the sense of outcome (compare Eve's “fruitless” pun, ix, 648; also ix, 1073). 2 **forbidden tree** One meaning is “the forbidding of the tree,” just as the title means “The Losing of Paradise” and “since created Man” (573) “since the creation of Man.” “Forbidden tree” is the first of many phrases (like fixed epithets in Homer) to return: x, 554. **mortal taste** “deadly taste” and “taste by mortals.” 4 **one greater Man** the Messiah. “For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.” Romans, v, 19. 7 **Oreb** Horeb, “the mountain of God” (Ex. iii, 1 ff., where Moses is identified as literally a shepherd) in Arabia near Mount Sinai (sometimes equated with Sinai or treated as a lower spur), where the Lord appeared to Moses in the burning bush. 9 **In the beginning** a punning recognition of Moses as the author of Genesis 10 **Rose out of Chaos** Milton's first

heresy, the orthodox view being that God created *ex nihilo*, that before creation was only “void” (Gen. i, 2). The identical expression appeared in the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*: “the world first rose out of Chaos” (end of Ch. X).

Delight thee more, and Siloa’s brook that flowed°
Fast by the oracle of God, I thence
Invoke thy aid to my adventurous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the° Aonian mount,° while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.°
And chiefly Thou, O Spirit,° that dost prefer
Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for Thou know’st; Thou from the first
Wast present, and, with mighty wings outspread,
Dovelike sat’st brooding° on the vast° Abyss
And mad’st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support,
That, to the height° of this great argument,°
I may assert Eternal Providence,

10—11 In contrast to the pagan mounts (cf. 15) and springs are hailed those of Moses, then the Mount Zion of David the psalmist, and finally Siloa, a pool outside Jerusalem flowing past the Temple, with the waters of which Jesus healed a blind man (John ix, 7). The line throughout (cf. vii, 39; ix, 13 ff.) is that a better source, holy, true—a muse that is none of the pagan Nine but the Heavenly Spirit, 17—makes a greater poem, even as the Jesus of *Paradise Regained* (iv, 346-47) found Greek and Roman literature “unworthy to compare/ With Sion’s songs.” The first paragraph encompasses the Trinity of God’s activities—Creator, Redeemer, Inspirer. 15 **the** Here, as regularly in his work, Milton, in keeping with the convention of his time, put “*th’*,” to signal that the *e* was not to be counted in the scansion before the following vowel. Today’s reader may be more distracted than helped by this device; accordingly, the *e* has been restored in *th’* and many other words, e.g., *count’nance*, *fall’n*, *Heav’n*, *wand’ring*. **Aonian mount** Helicon in Boeotia, sacred to the Muses 16 This proud boast (compare “Comus,” 44-45) echoes Boiardo and Ariosto ironically. **rhyme** verse, whether rhymed or not 17 **Spirit** a monosyllable 21 **brooding** a more accurate translation of the Hebrew than the King James Version “moved” (Gen. i, 2) or the Revised Standard “was moving.” Sir Thomas Browne spoke of “that gentle heat that brooded on the waters, and in six days hatched the World.” **vast** wasted, lifeless. 24 **height** Milton’s spelling and pronunciation were “highth.” **argument** The basic meaning is “subject.”

And justify the ways of God to men.°
Say first—for Heaven hides nothing from thy view,
Nor the deep tract of Hell—say first what cause
Moved our grand Parents, in that happy state,
Favoured of Heaven so highly, to fall off
From their Creator and transgress his will,
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?°
The infernal Serpent; he it was whose guile,
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride°
Had cast him out from Heaven, with all his host
Of rebel Angels, by whose aid aspiring
To set himself in glory above his peers,
He trusted to have equalled the Most High,
If he° opposed, and with ambitious aim
Against the throne and monarchy of God
Raised impious war in Heaven and battle proud,
With vain attempt. Him the Almighty Power
Hurl’d headlong flaming from the ethereal° sky,

With hideous ruin^o and combustion^o down
 To bottomless perdition, there to dwell
 In adamant chains and penal fire,
 Who durst defy the Omnipotent to arms.
 Nine times the space that measures day and night
 To mortal men, he with his horrid crew
 Lay vanquished, rolling in the fiery gulf,
 Confounded, though immortal; but his doom
 Reserved him to more wrath, for now the thought
 Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
 Torments him: round he throws his baleful eyes,
 That witnessed huge affliction and dismay,
 Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate;

26 The normal prose order would be: "And justify to men the ways of God." Cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 293-94. **men** often misquoted as "man," perhaps under the influence of Pope's "Laugh where we must, be candid where we can;/ But vindicate the ways of God to man" (*Essay on Man*, 15—16). 27—33 After the Invocation the Epic Question 36 **pride** key word, key sin, in both the fall of angels and the fall of man. vain attempt (44) is deadly serious wordplay. 41 **he** Satan 45 **ethereal** Note the literal use. 46 **ruin** Latin *ruina*, a fall (the same pun is brilliant at iv, 522) **combustion** "burning together"

At once, as far as angel's ken,^o he views
 The dismal situation waste and wild;
 A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
 As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames
 No light, but rather darkness visible^o
 Served only to discover sights of woe,
 Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace
 And rest can never dwell, hope never comes
 That comes to all,^o but torture without end
 Still urges, and a fiery deluge, fed
 With ever-burning sulphur unconsumed.
 Such place Eternal Justice had prepared
 For those rebellious, here their prison ordained
 In utter^o darkness, and their portion set,
 As far removed from God and light of Heaven
 As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.
 Oh, how unlike the place from whence they fell!
 There the companions of his fall, o'erwhelmed
 With floods and whirlwinds of tempestuous fire,
 He soon discerns, and, weltering^o by his side,
 One next himself in power, and next in crime,
 Long after known in Palestine, and named
 Beëlzebub.^o To whom the Arch-Enemy,
 And thence in Heaven called Satan,^o with bold words
 Breaking the horrid silence, thus began:

59 **angel's ken** The original has no apostrophe. an omission which proves nothing but leaves it uncertain as to whether "ken" is a noun or a verb. It is a noun in the next use, iii, 622. 63 It was an old conception that Hell. though "teeming with flame," was "void of light" (Anglo-Saxon Caedmonian poem. *Genesis B*). a place "where the light is as darkness" (Job x, 22). Cf. 181—83 and "Il Penseroso" (79-80) "Where glowing embers through the room/ Teach light to counterfeit a gloom." The paradox was too much for Milton's eccentric editor of 1732. Richard Bentley, who emended the epic line to read. "No light, but rather a transpicuous gloom." 66—67 **hope never comes/ That comes to all** (others), the greatest inner torment of hell, as famously indicated in Dante's "Lasciate ogni speranza, voi ch entrate" (Inferno, iii. 9) 72 **utter** outer 78 **weltering** tossing 81 **Beëlzebub** "God of flies" 82 **Satan** "the Adversary"

'If thou beest he—but oh, how fallen! how changed
 From him who, in the happy realms of light,^o
 Clothed with transcendent brightness, didst outshine
 Myriads, though bright!—if he whom mutual league,
 United thoughts and counsels, equal hope
 And hazard in the glorious enterprise,^o
 Joined with me once, now misery hath joined
 In equal ruin; into what pit thou seest
 From what height fallen: so much the stronger proved
 He with his thunder—and till then who knew
 The force of those dire arms? Yet not for those,
 Nor what the potent Victor in his rage
 Can else inflict, do I repent or change,
 Though changed in outward lustre, that fixed mind,
 And high disdain from sense of injured merit,
 That with the Mightiest raised me to contend,
 And to the fierce contention brought along
 Innumerable force of Spirits armed
 That durst dislike his reign, and, me preferring,
 His utmost power with adverse power opposed
 In dubious battle on the plains of Heaven,
 And shook his throne. What though the field be lost?^o
 All is not lost—the unconquerable will,
 And study of revenge, immortal hate,
 And courage never to submit or yield—
 And what is else^o not to be overcome.
 That glory never shall his wrath or might
 Extort from me. To bow and sue for grace
 With suppliant knee, and deify his power
 Who, from the terror of this arm, so late
 Doubted his empire—that were low indeed;^o

84-85 An imitation, such as Tasso had also made, of Aeneas's outburst when he received a vision of the mutilated Hector, "quantum mutatus ab illo/Hectore" (*Aeneid*, II, 274-75), but there is a piece of Isaiah too: "How art thou fallen from heaven" (xiv, 12). 89 It is made plain, soon enough, that it was not a "glorious enterprise". The Father of Lies, unable or disinclined to complete a true sentence, slips into romantic deception, perhaps even self-deception. 105 ff. The fine words deserve a better cause. 109 else besides 113-14 With God this is a joke, v, 721-24.

That were an ignominy^o and shame beneath
 This downfall; since by fate the strength of Gods
 And this empyreal substance^o cannot fail;
 Since, through experience of this great event,
 In arms not worse, in foresight much advanced,
 We may with more successful hope resolve
 To wage by force or guile^o eternal war
 Irreconcilable, to our grand Foe,
 Who now triumphs, and in the excess of joy
 Sole reigning holds the tyranny of Heaven.'
 So spake the apostate Angel, though in pain,
 Vaunting aloud, but racked with deep despair;
 And him thus answered soon his bold compeer:
 'O Prince, O Chief of many thronèd Powers
 That led the embattled Seraphim to war
 Under thy conduct, and, in dreadful deeds
 Fearless, endangered Heaven's perpetual King,^o
 And put to proof his high supremacy,
 Whether upheld by strength, or chance, or fate!
 Too well I see and rue the dire event
 That, with sad overthrow and foul defeat,
 Hath lost us Heaven, and all this mighty host

In horrible destruction laid thus low,
 As far as Gods and Heavenly Essences
 Can perish: for the mind and spirit remains
 Invincible and vigour soon returns,
 Though all our glory extinct, and happy state
 Here swallowed up in endless misery.
 But what if he our Conqueror (whom I now
 Of force believe almighty, since no less
 Than such could have o'erpowered such force as ours)
 Have left us this our spirit and strength entire
 Strongly to suffer and support our pains,
 That we may so suffice his vengeful ire
 Or do him mightier service as his thralls
 By right of war, whate'er his business be,
 Here in the heart of Hell to work in fire.
 Or do his errands in the gloomy Deep?

115 **ignominy** pronounced ignomy 117 **empyreal substance** made of the purest
 element, fire 121 **guile** the first hint of a new tack; cf. 646 131 The flatterer echoes
 the master's lies.

What can it then avail though yet we feel
 Strength undiminished, or eternal being
 To undergo eternal punishment?

Whereto with speedy words the Arch-Fiend replied:

'Fallen Cherub, to be weak is miserable,
 Doing or suffering^o—but of this be sure:
 To do aught good never will be our task,
 But ever to do ill our sole delight,
 As being the contrary to his high will
 Whom we resist. If then his providence
 Out of our evil seek to bring forth good,
 Our labour must be to pervert that end,
 And out of good still to find means of evil;
 Which oft-times may succeed so as perhaps
 Shall grieve him, if I fail not,^o and disturb
 His inmost counsels from their destined aim.
 But see! the angry Victor hath recalled
 His ministers of vengeance and pursuit
 Back to the gates of Heaven: the sulphurous hail,
 Shot after us in storm, o'erblown hath laid
 The fiery surge that from the precipice
 Of Heaven received us falling; and the thunder,
 Winged with red lightning and impetuous rage,
 Perhaps hath spent his shafts, and ceases now
 To bellow through the vast and boundless Deep.
 Let us not slip the occasion, whether scorn
 Or satiate fury yield it from our Foe.
 Seest thou yon dreary plain, forlorn and wild,
 The seat of desolation, void of light,
 Save what the glimmering of these livid flames
 Casts pale and dreadful? Thither let us tend
 From off the tossing of these fiery waves;
 There rest, if any rest can harbour there;
 And, reassembling our afflicted^o powers,
 Consult how we may henceforth most offend^o
 Our Enemy, our own loss how repair,
 How overcome this dire calamity,

158 **Doing or suffering** whether we are active or passive; cf. ii, 199 167 **if I fail not**
 if I am not mistaken 186 **afflicted** literally, beaten down 187 **offend** attack. Note the
 rhyme with 183 and the further rhyming of 185, 188, 191.

What reinforcement we may gain from hope,
If not, what resolution from despair.’°

Thus Satan, talking to his nearest mate,
With head uplift above the wave and eyes
That sparkling blazed; his other parts besides
Prone on the flood, extended long and large,
Lay floating many a rood,° in bulk as huge
As whom the fables name of monstrous size,
Titanian° or Earth-born, that warred on Jove,
Briareos° or Typhon,° whom the den
By ancient Tarsus held, or that sea-beast
Leviathan,° which God of all his works
Created hugest that swim the ocean-stream.
Him, haply slumbering on the Norway foam,
The pilot of some small night-foundered skiff
Deeming some island, oft, as seamen tell,
With fixed anchor in his scaly rind
Moors by his side under the lee,° while night
Invests the sea and wished morn delays.
So stretched out huge in length the Arch-Fiend lay,
Chained on the burning lake; nor ever thence
Had risen or heaved his head but that the will
And high permission of all-ruling Heaven
Left him at large to his own dark designs,
That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enraged might see
How all his malice served but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace, and mercy, shown
On Man by him seduced, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath, and vengeance poured.

191 **despair** Landor objected to the rhyme with 188. 196 **rood** twenty feet or so 198
The Titans and the Giants both “warred on Jove.” 199 **Briareos** a hundred-armed
monster **Typhon** another monster or giant—his name means “whirlwind” (ii, 541)—
assigned a hundred heads by Pindar and located in a cave in Cilicia in Asia Minor, of
which *Tarsus* (l. 200) was the chief city 201 **Leviathan** cf. Isaiah, xxvii, 1. The
fable about the treacherous whale—a symbol of Satan in the medieval bestiaries—
illustrates what can happen to the “night-foundered” soul that anchors in sin. 207
under the lee sheltered from the wind

Forthwith upright he rears from off the pool
His mighty stature; on each hand the flames,
Driven backward, slope their pointing spires, and, rolled
In billows, leave i’ the midst a horrid vale.
Then with expanded wings he steers his flight
Aloft, incumbent on the dusky air,
That felt unusual weight, till on dry land
He lights—if it were land that ever burned
With solid, as the lake with liquid fire,
And such appeared in hue as when the force
Of subterranean wind transports a hill
Torn from Pelorus,° or the shattered side
Of thundering Aetna, whose combustible
And fuelled entrails, thence conceiving fire,
Sublimed with mineral fury,° aid the winds,
And leave a singed bottom all involved
With stench and smoke; such resting found the sole
Of unblest feet. Him followed his next mate,
Both glorying to have ’scaped the Stygian° flood
As gods, and by their own recovered strength,
Not by the sufferance of Supernal Power.

‘Is this the region, this the soil, the clime,’
 Said then the lost Archangel, ‘this the seat
 That we must change for Heaven, this mournful gloom
 For that celestial light? Be it so, since he
 Who now is sovran can dispose and bid
 What shall be right: farthest from him is best,
 Whom reason hath equalled, force hath made supreme
 Above his equals. Farewell, happy fields,
 Where joy for ever dwells! Hail, horrors! hail,
 Infernal World! and thou, profoundest Hell,
 Receive thy new possessor—one who brings
 A mind not to be changed by place or time.
 The mind is its^o own place, and in itself

232 **Pelorus** the northeast cape of Sicily, an island that Diodorus Siculus supposed had been torn from the mainland by an earthquake. The volcanic Mount Aetna rose south to a height of 10,705 feet. 235 **Sublimed with mineral fury** vaporized by heat 239 **Stygian** Styx, “the flood of deadly hate,” ii, 577, was the best known of the four rivers of Hell. 254 **its** one of the two places in the poem (iv, 813) where this modern possessive is used instead of the regular Elizabethan neuter his

Can make a Heaven of Hell, a Hell of Heaven.
 What matter where, if I be still the same,
 And what I should be, all but less than he
 Whom thunder hath made greater? Here at least
 We shall be free; the Almighty hath not built
 Here for his envy, will not drive us hence;
 Here we may reign secure, and, in my choice,
 To reign is worth ambition, though in Hell:
 Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.^o
 But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
 The associates and co-partners of our loss,
 Lie thus astonished^o on the oblivious^o pool,
 And call them not to share with us their part
 In this unhappy mansion, or once more
 With rallied arms to try what may be yet
 Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?’

So Satan spake; and him Beëlzebub
 Thus answered: ‘Leader of those armies bright
 Which, but the Omnipotent, none could have foiled,
 If once they hear that voice, their liveliest pledge
 Of hope in fears and dangers, heard so oft
 In worst extremes, and on the perilous edge^o
 Of battle, when it raged, in all assaults
 Their surest signal, they will soon resume
 New courage and revive, though now they lie
 Grovelling and prostrate on yon lake of fire,
 As we erewhile, astounded and amazed;
 No wonder, fallen such a pernicious height!’

He scarce had ceased when the superior Fiend
 Was moving toward the shore; his ponderous shield,
 Ethereal temper, massy, large, and round,
 Behind him cast. The broad circumference
 Hung on his shoulders like the moon, whose orb

263 Achilles in Hades said, “I would rather be a serf in a poor man’s house and be above ground than reign among the dead” (*Odyssey*, XI. 489-91). Lucifer, in the second act of Joost van den Vondel’s drama *Lucifer* (1654), had disagreed: “Better the prince of some inferior court/ Than second, or less, in beatific light.” 266 **astonished** stunned **oblivious** inducing oblivion 276 **edge** pun on Latin acies, which has the further meaning of the forefront of an army; cf. vi, 108

Through optic glass the Tuscan artist^o views
 At evening, from the top of Fesole,
 Or in Valdarno,^o to descry new lands,
 Rivers, or mountains, in her spotty globe.
 His spear, to equal which the tallest pine
 Hewn on Norwegian hills to be the mast
 Of some great ammiral^o were but a wand,
 He walked with, to support uneasy steps
 Over the burning marl,^o not like those steps
 On Heaven's azure; and the torrid clime
 Smote on him sore besides, vaulted with fire.
 Nathless he so endured till on the beach
 Of that inflamèd sea he stood and called
 His legions, Angel forms, who lay entranced
 Thick as autumnal leaves^o that strew the brooks

288 ff. Galileo, the first to put the telescope to astronomical use. Professor at the University of Florence for life, he is represented as using *Fesole* (three syllables), a hill near the city. Blind, he was confined in the villa at Alcetri when Milton made the visit mentioned in *Areopagitica*. 290 **Valdarno** valley of the (river) Arno, in the lovely upper part of which Florence was situated 294 **ammiral** the admiral's ship, chief ship 296 **marl** soil; cf. 562 302 ff. The famous simile of the autumnal leaves has precedents in Homer, Bacchylides, Apollonius Rhodius, Virgil, Dante, Tasso, and Ariosto. Drayton wrote (*The Barons' Wars*, II, 451), "As leaves in autumn, so the bodies fell." John Foxe said in his sixteenth-century *Book of Martyrs* (London, 1851, I, 1000), speaking of the plague in Italy: "The common people died without number; and like as in the cold autumn the leaves of the trees do fall, even so did the youth of the city consume and fall away." *Vallombrosa* continues Milton's Florentine references, being the site of an eleventh-century Benedictine abbey eighteen miles southeast, but promotes the symbolism by meaning "vale of shades" and thus associating with the valley of the shadow of death: the lost souls suffering "the second death" (see Rev. xx, 14; xxi, 8) of damnation are numerous, though it was once spring and summer for them. They are "abject and lost," the next part of the simile implies, as the hosts of Pharaoh drowned in the Red Sea after the waves had parted to let the Chosen People through to safety. The constellation of the hunter Orion, 305, set at the beginning of November, a time of storms. By proceeding from leaves to sedge to the Egyptian "chivalry" (cavalry) Milton works back to the first rout of the forces of evil. "Confusion worse confounded" (ii, 996) is the theme of the first two books, in contrast to the order that rules in Heaven.

In Vallombrosa, where the Etrurian shades
 High overarched embower; or scattered sedge
 Afloat, when with fierce winds Orion armed
 Hath vexed the Red Sea coast, whose waves o'erthrew
 Busiris and his Memphian chivalry
 While with perfidious hatred they pursued
 The sojourners of Goshen who beheld
 From the safe shore their floating carcasses
 And broken chariot-wheels—so thick bestrewn,
 Abject and lost, lay these, covering the flood,
 Under amazement^o of their hideous change.
 He called so loud that all the hollow deep^o
 Of Hell resounded: 'Princes, Potentates,
 Warriors, the Flower of Heaven, once yours, now lost,
 If such astonishment as this can seize
 Eternal Spirits;^o or have ye chosen this place
 After the toil of battle to repose
 Your wearied virtue,^o for the ease you find
 To slumber here, as in the vales of Heaven?
 Or in this abject posture have ye sworn
 To adore the Conqueror? who now beholds

Cherub and Seraph rolling in the flood
 With scattered arms and ensigns, till anon
 His swift pursuers from Heaven-gates discern
 The advantage, and, descending, tread us down
 Thus drooping, or with linked thunderbolts
 Transfix us to the bottom of his gulf:
 Awake, arise, or be for ever fallen!’

They heard and were abashed, and up they sprung
 Upon the wing, as when men wont to watch
 On duty, sleeping found by whom they dread,
 Rouse and bestir themselves ere well awake.
 Nor did they not perceive the evil plight
 In which they were, or the fierce pains not feel,
 Yet to their General’s voice they soon obeyed
 Innumerable. As when the potent rod
 Of Amram’s son,° in Egypt’s evil day,

313 **amazement** stupefaction, like *astonishment*, 317 314 **deep** There is MS.
 authority for *deeps*. 318 ff. Sarcasm is a devilish trait. 320 **virtue** manliness, also
 power 339 **Amram’s son** Moses

Waved round the coast, upcalled a pitchy cloud
 Of locusts, warping° on the eastern wind,
 That o’er the realm of impious Pharaoh hung
 Like Night and darkened all the land of Nile,
 So numberless were those bad Angels seen
 Hovering on wing under the cope of Hell,
 ’Twixt upper, nether, and surrounding fires;
 Till, at a signal given, the uplifted spear
 Of their great Sultan waving to direct
 Their course, in even balance down they light
 On the firm brimstone and fill all the plain:
 A multitude like which the populous North
 Poured never from her frozen loins to pass
 Rhene or the Danaw,° when her barbarous sons
 Came like a deluge on the South and spread
 Beneath Gibraltar to the Libyan sands.
 Forthwith, from every squadron and each band,
 The heads and leaders thither haste where stood
 Their great Commander: godlike Shapes, and Forms
 Excelling human; princely Dignities;
 And Powers that erst in Heaven sat on thrones,
 Though of their names in Heavenly records now
 Be no memorial, blotted out and rased
 By their rebellion from the Books of Life.
 Nor had they yet among the sons of Eve
 Got them new names, till, wandering o’er the earth,
 Through God’s high sufferance for the trial of man,
 By falsities and lies the greatest part
 Of mankind they corrupted to forsake
 God their Creator, and the invisible
 Glory of him that made them to transform
 Oft to the image of a brute, adorned
 With gay religions full of pomp and gold,
 And devils to adore for deities:
 Then were they known to men by various names,
 And various idols through the heathen world.
 Say, Muse, their names then known, who first, who last,°
 Roused from the slumber on that fiery couch
 At their great Emperor’s call, as next in worth

341 **warping** swerving 353 **Rhene or the Danaw** Rhine or the Danube 376 ff. This is comparable to Homer's catalogue of the ships, *Iliad*, II, 484 ff.

Came singly where he stood on the bare strand,
While the promiscuous crowd stood yet aloof?
The chief were those who, from the pit of Hell
Roaming to seek their prey on Earth, durst fix
Their seats, long after, next the seat of God,
Their altars by his altar, gods adored
Among the nations round, and durst abide
Jehovah thundering out of Sion, throned
Between the Cherubim; yea, often placed
Within his sanctuary itself their shrines,
Abominations; and with cursed things
His holy rites and solemn feasts profaned,
And with their darkness durst affront his light.
First, Moloch,^o horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents' tears;
Though, for the noise of drums and timbrels loud,
Their children's cries unheard that passed through fire
To his grim idol. Him the Ammonite^o
Worshipped in Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon. Nor content with such
Audacious neighbourhood, the wisest heart
Of Solomon he led by fraud to build^o
His temple right against the temple of God
On that opprobrious hill, and made his grove
The pleasant valley of Hinnom, Tophet thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of Hell.
Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons,
From Aroer^o to Nebo and the wild

392 **Moloch** means *king*. 396—99 The Ammonite, a people hated by Israel and subdued by Jephthah (cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 285), had Rabba as their chief city, east of the Jordan. 401—03 See 1 Kings xi, 7; 2 Kings xxiii, 13, 14, *that opprobrious hill* being the Mount of Olives. 407 ff. Aroer was on the river Arnon (399) which entered the Dead Sea at the northern boundary of Moab (406). Nebo in the north was the elevation where Moses took his first and last view of the Promised Land. Abarim (408) was the name of mountains to the west. Hesebon (Heshbon) lay north—all within the tribe of Reuben, as were the other places named as “Seon's realm” (409) (he was the king of the Amorites), territory east of the Asphaltic Pool (411), the Dead Sea, noted for the masses of asphalt or bitumen it tosses up. The fifteen-year-old poet, in his versification of Psalm cxxxvi, noted God “foiled bold Seon and his host,/ That ruled the Amorrean coast” (65—66).

Of southmost Abarim; in Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma, clad with vines,
And Eleale to the Asphaltic Pool:
Peor his other name, when he enticed
Israel in Sittim,^o on their march from Nile,
To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.
Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged
Even to that hill of scandal,^o by the grove
Of Moloch homicide, lust hard by hate,
Till good Josiah^o drove them thence to Hell.
With these came they who, from the bordering flood
Of old Euphrates to the brook that parts
Egypt from Syrian ground, had general names
Of Baalim and Ashtaroth—those male,

These feminine. For Spirits, when they please,
 Can either sex assume, or both, so soft
 And uncompounded is their essence pure,
 Not tied or manacled with joint or limb,
 Nor founded on the brittle strength of bones,
 Like cumbrous flesh, but, in what shape they choose,
 Dilated or condensed, bright or obscure,
 Can execute their aery purposes
 And works of love or enmity fulfil.
 For those the race of Israel oft forsook
 Their Living Strength, and unfrequented left
 His righteous altar, bowing^o lowly down
 To bestial gods; for which their heads, as low
 Bowed^o down in battle, sunk before the spear
 Of despicable foes. With these in troop
 Came Astoreth, whom the Phoenicians called
 Astarte, queen of heaven, with crescent horns;
 To whose bright image nightly by the moon
 Sidonian^o virgins paid their vows and songs;
 In Sion also not unsung, where stood

413 **Sittim** Shittim, the last stop, east of the Jordan, opposite Jericho, of the Israelites on their exodus from Egypt, where “the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab . . . and Israel joined himself unto Baal-peor” (Num. xxv, 1, 3) 416 **hill of scandal** same as *that opprobrious hill*, 403 418 **Josiah** see 2 Kings xxiii 434, 436 **bowing**—**Bowed** vengeful wordplay 441 **Sidonian** Phoenician

Her temple on the offensive mountain,^o built
 By that uxorious king^o whose heart, though large,
 Beguiled by fair idolatresses, fell
 To idols foul. Thammuz^o came next behind,
 Whose annual wound in Lebanon allured
 The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
 In amorous ditties all a summer’s day,
 While smooth^o Adonis from his native rock
 Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
 Of Thammuz yearly wounded: the love-tale
 Infected Sion’s daughters with like heat,
 Whose wanton passions in the sacred porch
 Ezekiel^o saw, when, by the vision led,
 His eye surveyed the dark idolatries
 Of alienated Judah. Next came one
 Who mourned in earnest, when the captive ark
 Maimed his brute image, head and hands lopped off,
 In his own temple, on the grunsel-edge,^o
 Where he fell flat and shamed his worshippers—
 Dagon^o his name, sea-monster, upward man
 And downward fish—yet had his temple high
 Reared in Azotus, dreaded through the coast
 Of Palestine, in Gath and Ascalon,
 And Accaron and Gaza’s frontier bounds.
 Him followed Rimmon,^o whose delightful seat
 Was fair Damascus, on the fertile banks

443 **the offensive mountain** cf. 403, 416 444 **uxorious king** Solomon, who “had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines” (1 Kings xi, 3) 446 **Thammuz** the Babylonian vegetation god, equivalent of Greek *Adonis*—pictured as a river at 450 (which indeed “Ran purple” because of loose particles of red hematite). In the words of Sir J. G. Frazer, “The true name of the deity was Tammuz: the appellation of Adonis is merely the Semitic *Adon*, ‘lord,’ a title of honour by which his worshippers addressed him. . . . In the religious literature of Babylonia

Tammuz appears as the youthful spouse or lover of Ishtar, the great mother goddess, the embodiment of the reproductive energies of nature.” 450 **smooth** flowing; cf. “smooth-sliding Mincius,” “Lycidas,” 86. 455 Ezekiel, viii, 14 460 **grunsel-edge** threshold 462 **Dagon** Philistine deity; see 1 Samuel v, 4, and note to *Samson Agonistes* 13 467 **Rimmon** Syrian deity. The Biblical references are 2 Kings v, xvi.

Of Abbana and Pharphar, lucid streams.
 He also against the house of God was bold:
 A leper once he lost, and gained a king—
 Ahaz, his sottish conqueror, whom he drew
 God’s altar to disparage and displace
 For one of Syrian mode, whereon to burn
 His odious offerings, and adore the gods
 Whom he had vanquished. After these appeared
 A crew who, under names of old renown—
 Osiris, Isis, Orus, and their train—
 With monstrous shapes and sorceries abused
 Fanatic Egypt and her priests to seek
 Their wandering gods disguised in brutish forms°
 Rather than human. Nor did Israel ’scape
 The infection, when their borrowed gold composed
 The calf in Oreb; and the rebel king°
 Doubled that sin in Bethel and in Dan,
 Likening his Maker to the grazed ox,
 Jehovah, who, in one night, when he passed
 From Egypt marching, equalled with one stroke
 Both her first-born and all her bleating gods.
 Belial° came last, than whom a Spirit more lewd
 Fell not from Heaven, or more gross to love
 Vice for itself. To him no temple stood
 Or altar smoked; yet who more oft than he
 In temples and at altars, when the priest
 Turns atheist, as did Eli’s sons,° who filled
 With lust and violence the house of God?
 In courts and palaces he also reigns,
 And in luxurious cities, where the noise
 Of riot ascends above their loftiest towers,
 And injury and outrage; and when night
 Darkens the streets, then wander forth the sons
 Of Belial, flown with insolence and wine.°
 Witness the streets of Sodom, and that night

481 Osiris was a bull, Isis cow-horned, Anubis dog-headed (cf. “Nativity Hymn,” 211-12). 484 ff. **rebel king** Jeroboam rebelled against Solomon’s successor, Rehoboam, and was guilty of making two golden calves. 490 **Belial**, means *worthlessness*. 495 **Eli’s sons** “were sons of Belial; they knew not the Lord,” as detailed in 1 Samuel ii, 12 ff. 501—02 possibly a hit at the Cavaliers

In Gibeah,° when the hospitable door
 Exposed a matron, to prevent worse rape.
 These were the prime in order and in might:
 The rest were long to tell, though far renowned,
 The Ionian gods—of Javan’s° issue held
 Gods, yet confessed later than Heaven and Earth,
 Their boasted parents; Titan, Heaven’s first-born,
 With his enormous brood, and birthright seized
 By younger Saturn: he from mightier Jove,
 His own and Rhea’s son, like measure found;
 So Jove usurping reigned. These, first in Crete
 And Ida known, thence on the snowy top
 Of cold Olympus ruled the middle air,

Their highest heaven; or on the Delphian cliff,
 Or in Dodona,^o and through all the bounds
 Of Doric land; or who with Saturn^o old
 Fled over Adria to the Hesperian fields,
 And o'er the Celtic roamed the utmost Isles.

All these and more came flocking, but with looks
 Downcast and damp, yet such wherein appeared
 Obscure some glimpse of joy to have found their Chief
 Not in despair, to have found themselves not lost
 In loss itself, which on his countenance cast
 Like doubtful hue; but he, his wonted pride
 Soon recollecting, with high words, that bore
 Semblance of worth, not substance, gently raised
 Their fainted^o courage, and dispelled their fears:
 Then straight commands that, at the warlike sound
 Of trumpets loud and clarions, be upreared
 His mighty standard. That proud honour claimed

504 **Gibeah** This gruesome tale of a sacrificed concubine is in Judges xix. In 1667 “door” was plural and “Exposed a matron” was “Yielded their matrons,” and “avoid” was “prevent”: bringing in Genesis, xix, 8. 508 After the Semitic deities the Greek gods get less attention, and an equation is made between Ion (ancestor of the Ionians or Greeks) and Javan, the son of Japhet = Noah’s son and Iapetus the Titan. 518 **Dodona** the oracle (cf. the reference to Delphi, 517) and temple of Zeus in Epirus 519-21 Defeated by his son Jove, *Saturn* fled over the *Adriatic* to Italy (520) and even wandered to France and Britain (521) 530 **fainted** so the 1667 text; 1674 has *fainting*.

Azazel^o as his right, a Cherub tall,
 Who forthwith from the glittering staff unfurled
 The imperial ensign, which, full high advanced,
 Shone like a meteor streaming to the wind,
 With gems and golden lustre rich emblazed,
 Seraphic arms and trophies, all the while
 Sonorous metal blowing martial sounds;
 At which the universal host upsent
 A shout that tore Hell’s concave, and beyond
 Frighted the reign of Chaos and old Night.
 All in a moment through the gloom were seen
 Ten thousand banners rise into the air,
 With orient^o colours waving; with them rose
 A forest huge of spears, and thronging helms
 Appeared, and serried shields in thick array
 Of depth immeasurable. Anon they move
 In perfect phalanx to the Dorian mood^o
 Of flutes and soft recorders—such as raised
 To height of noblest temper heroes old
 Arming to battle, and instead of rage
 Deliberate valour^o breathed, firm, and unmoved
 With dread of death to flight or foul retreat,
 Nor wanting power to mitigate and suage^o
 With solemn touches^o troubled thoughts, and chase
 Anguish and doubt and fear and sorrow and pain
 From mortal or immortal minds. Thus they,
 Breathing united force with fixed thought,
 Moved on in silence to soft pipes that charmed
 Their painful steps o’er the burnt soil. And now
 Advanced in view they stand, a horrid front

534 **Azazel** “brave in retreating” (Newton). Milton follows Cabalist tradition in making him Satan’s standard-bearer 546 **orient** bright 550 **Dorian mood** martial, in contrast to “soft Lydian airs,” “L’Allegro” (136) 554 **Deliberate valour** Milton is

following, right down to this phrase, Plutarch's description of the Spartans under Lycurgus. "It was at once a magnificent and a terrible sight to see them march on to the tune of their flutes, without any disorder in their ranks, any discomposure in their minds, or change in their countenances, calmly and cheerfully moving with the music to the deadly fight. Men, in this temper, were not likely to be possessed with fear or any transport of fury. but with the deliberate valour of hope and assurance."
 556 **suage** assuage 557 **touches** strains

Of dreadful length and dazzling arms, in guise
 Of warriors old, with ordered spear and shield,
 Awaiting what command their mighty Chief
 Had to impose. He through the armed files
 Darts his experienced eye, and soon traverse
 The whole battalion views—their order due,
 Their visages and statures as of gods;
 Their number last he sums. And now his heart
 Distends with pride, and, hardening in his strength,
 Glories: for never, since created Man,
 Met such embodied force as, named with these,
 Could merit more than that small infantry°
 Warred on by cranes—though all the giant brood
 Of Phlegra° with the heroic race were joined
 That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
 Mixed with auxiliar gods; and what resounds
 In fable or romance of Uther's son,°
 Begirt with British and Armoric° knights;
 And all who since, baptized or infidel,
 Jostled in Aspramont, or Montalban,
 Damasco, or Marocco, or Trebisonde,°
 Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore
 When Charlemain with all his peerage fell
 By Fontarabbia.° Thus far these beyond

575 **infantry** pun on (1) foot-soldiers and (2) diminutive people, "that pygmean race" (780) (slightly over one foot tall) whom Homer, in a comparable martial simile, mentions as suffering slaughter by the cranes (*Iliad*, beginning of Book III)
 577-79 **Phlegra** on an isthmus in Macedonia, site of a clash between the giants and the gods. Polyneices, the son of Oedipus, besieged *Thebes*, as related in Aeschylus's drama *The Seven Against Thebes*. *Ilium*, of course, witnessed the Greeks against the Trojans, with "auxiliar"—assisting—gods on each side. 580 **Uther's son** King Arthur 581 **Armoric** reference to Brittany (Britain in France) 583—84 Milton ranges from Italy and France to Asia and Africa and the Black Sea for these places renowned in chivalric romance. 585-87 Milton's source for this passage is unknown. It was not the famous *Chanson de Roland*, the twelfth-century epic, which was not discovered and made available until after the French Revolution. Charlemagne did not fall at Fontarabbia, but legend has it that forty miles from there, in the Pyrenees, at Roncevaux, Charlemagne's nephew Roland made a rear-guard stand to the death when betrayed during the emperor's return from the campaign in Spain against the Saracens (Arabs, thus perhaps the reason for Milton's shift to Fontarabbia).

Compare of mortal prowess, yet observed
 Their dread Commander; he, above the rest
 In shape and gesture proudly eminent,
 Stood like a tower: his form had yet not lost
 All her original brightness, nor appeared
 Less than Archangel ruined, and the excess
 Of glory obscured—as when the sun new-risen
 Looks through the horizontal misty air
 Shorn of his beams, or, from behind the moon,
 In dim eclipse, disastrous twilight sheds
 On half the nations, and with fear of change

Perplexes monarchs.° Darkened so, yet shone
 Above them all the Archangel; but his face
 Deep scars of thunder had intrenched, and care
 Sat on his faded cheek, but under brows
 Of dauntless courage, and considerate pride
 Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
 Signs of remorse and passion, to behold
 The fellows of his crime—the followers rather
 (Far other once beheld in bliss), condemned
 For ever now to have their lot in pain,
 Millions of Spirits for his fault amerced°
 Of Heaven, and from eternal splendours flung
 For his revolt; yet faithful how they stood,
 Their glory withered, as, when Heaven's fire
 Hath scathed the forest oaks or mountain pines,
 With singed top their stately growth, though bare,
 Stands on the blasted heath.° He now prepared
 To speak; whereat their doubled ranks they bend
 From wing to wing, and half enclose him round
 With all his peers: attention held them mute.
 Thrice he assayed, and thrice, in spite of scorn,

594—99 This passage worried the original licenser of *Paradise Lost* as possibly treasonous. The archbishop's deputy might have hesitated still longer had he connected this with the allusion in *Eikonoklastes* to "those who, being exalted in high place above their merit, fear all change" (ch. XVI, second sentence). 609 **amerced** mulcted (French *à merci*, at the mercy of) 615 **blasted heath** The first thought is *Macbeth* I, iii, 77, where also "blasted" means "withered" (612) by lightning. This continues the autumn-death line.

Tears, such as Angels weep, burst forth; at last
 Words interwove with sighs found out their way:
 'O myriads of immortal Spirits! O Powers
 Matchless, but with the Almighty!—and that strife
 Was not inglorious, though the event° was dire,
 As this place testifies, and this dire change,
 Hateful to utter. But what power of mind,
 Foreseeing or presaging, from the depth
 Of knowledge past or present could have feared
 How such united force° of gods, how such
 As stood like these, could ever know repulse?
 For who can yet believe, though after loss,
 That all these puissant legions, whose exile
 Hath emptied Heaven,° shall fail to reascend,
 Self-raised, and repossess their native seat?
 For me, be witness all the host of Heaven,
 If counsels different° or danger shunned
 By me have lost our hopes. But he who reigns
 Monarch in Heaven till then as one secure
 Sat on his throne, upheld by old repute,
 Consent or custom, and his regal state
 Put forth at full, but still his strength concealed,
 Which tempted our attempt, and wrought our fall.
 Henceforth his might we know, and know our own,
 So as not either to provoke or dread
 New war, provoked: our better part remains
 To work in close design, by fraud or guile,
 What force effected not; that he no less
 At length from us may find, who overcomes
 By force hath overcome but half his foe.
 Space may produce new Worlds; whereof so rife
 There went a fame° in Heaven that he ere long

Intended to create, and therein plant
A generation whom his choice regard
Should favour equal to the Sons of Heaven.
Thither, if but to pry, shall be perhaps

624 **event** outcome 629 **united force** an echo from 560 633 **emptied Heaven** Satan exaggerates, or prevaricates, as usual. Only “the third part of Heaven’s sons” (ii, 692) rebelled, as Revelation xii, 4 indicated. 636 **different** A meaning related to *defer* has been suggested. 651 **fame** Latin *fama*, rumor

Our first eruption—thither, or elsewhere:
For this infernal pit shall never hold
Celestial Spirits in bondage, nor the Abyss
Long under darkness cover. But these thoughts
Full counsel must mature. Peace is despaired,
For who can think submission? War then, war
Open or understood, must be resolved.’

He spake; and, to confirm his words, out flew
Millions of flaming swords, drawn from the thighs
Of mighty Cherubim; the sudden blaze
Far round illumined Hell. Highly they raged
Against the Highest, and fierce with grasped arms
Clashed on their sounding shields the din of war,
Hurling defiance toward the vault of Heaven.

There stood a hill not far whose grisly top
Belched fire and rolling smoke; the rest entire
Shone with a glossy scurf—undoubted sign
That in his womb was hid metallic ore,
The work of sulphur. Thither, winged with speed,
A numerous brigade hastened, as when bands
Of pioneers, with spade and pickaxe armed,
Forerun the royal camp to trench a field
Or cast a rampart. Mammon^o led them on,
Mammon, the least erected Spirit that fell
From Heaven; for even in Heaven his looks and thoughts
Were always downward bent, admiring more
The riches of Heaven’s pavement, trodden gold,
Than aught divine or holy else enjoyed
In vision beatific; by him first
Men also, and by his suggestion taught,
Ransacked the centre, and with impious hands
Rifled the bowels of their mother Earth
For treasures better hid. Soon had his crew
Opened into the hill a spacious wound,
And digged out ribs of gold.^o Let none admire^o
That riches grow in Hell; that soil may best
Deserve the precious bane. And here let those

678 **Mammon** Syriac for wealth 689—90 A curious parody of creation, to be compared with viii, 465—67, even as 710—11, below, is the devilish version of 9-10, above. 690 **admire** marvel

Who boast in mortal things, and wondering tell
Of Babel, and the works of Memphian kings,^o
Learn how their greatest monuments of fame,
And strength, and art, are easily outdone
By Spirits reprobate, and in an hour
What in an age they, with incessant toil
And hands innumerable, scarce perform.
Nigh on the plain, in many cells prepared,
That underneath had veins of liquid fire^o
Sluiced from the lake, a second multitude

With wondrous art founded° the massy ore,
 Severing each kind, and scummed the bullion-dross;
 A third as soon had formed within the ground
 A various mould, and from the boiling cells
 By strange conveyance filled each hollow nook—
 As in an organ, from one blast of wind,
 To many a row of pipes the sound-board breathes.
 Anon out of the earth a fabric huge
 Rose like an exhalation, with the sound
 Of dulcet symphonies and voices sweet,
 Built like a temple, where pilasters° round
 Were set, and Doric pillars overlaid
 With golden architrave;° nor did there want
 Cornice or frieze, with bossy sculptures graven:
 The roof was fretted gold. Not Babylon
 Nor great Alcairo° such magnificence
 Equalled in all their glories, to enshrine
 Belus° or Serapis° their gods, or seat
 Their kings, when Egypt with Assyria strove
 In wealth and luxury. The ascending pile
 Stood fixed her stately height, and straight the doors,
 Opening their brazen folds, discover, wide
 Within, her ample spaces o'er the smooth
 And level pavement: from the arched roof,
 Pendent by subtle magic, many a row

694 **Memphian kings**, e.g., the builders of the pyramids 701 **liquid fire** mentioned
 229 703 **founded** 1674 reads *found out*. 713 **pilasters** square columns 715
architrave the beam that rests on the pillars 718 **Alcairo** Cairo, ancient Memphis
 720 **Belus** chief Babylonian god **Serapis** the Underworld aspect of Osiris

Of starry lamps and blazing cressets,° fed
 With naphtha and asphaltus, yielded light
 As from a sky. The hasty multitude
 Admiring entered; and the work some praise,
 And some the architect: his hand was known
 In Heaven by many a towered structure high,
 Where sceptred Angels held their residence
 And sat as Princes, whom the supreme King
 Exalted to such power, and gave to rule,
 Each in his hierarchy, the Orders bright.
 Nor was his name unheard or unadored
 In ancient Greece, and in Ausonian land°
 Men called him Mulciber,° and how he fell
 From Heaven they fabled, thrown by angry Jove
 Sheer o'er the crystal battlements: from morn
 To noon he fell, from noon to dewy eve,
 A summer's day,° and with the setting sun
 Dropped from the zenith, like a falling star,
 On Lemnos, the Aegaeon isle. Thus they relate,
 Erring; for he with this rebellious rout
 Fell long before; nor aught availed him now
 To have built in Heaven high towers; nor did he 'scape
 By all his engines, but was headlong sent,
 With his industrious crew, to build in Hell.

Meanwhile the winged Heralds, by command
 Of sovran power, with awful ceremony
 And trumpet's sound throughout the host proclaim
 A solemn council forthwith to be held
 At Pandemonium,° the high capital°
 Of Satan and his peers. Their summons called
 From every band and squared regiment°

728 **cressets** hanging lanterns 739 **Ausonian land** Italy in the time of the Romans
 740 **Mulciber** More familiar as Hephaestus or Vulcan, but Milton uses the name that means the *softener or welder* of metal. He is lame in the *Iliad*, perhaps as a consequence of his fall to Lemnos in a passage in Book I (588—95) that Milton echoes, and he uses the incident as an archetype of the Scriptural fall. In fact the three words “fell/ From Heaven,” 740—41, were first used at 491. 744 **A summer’s day** cf. 449 756 **Pandemonium** the palace of *all the devils* (Milton’s coinage; opposite of pantheon, all the gods) **capital** perhaps *capitol*(?) 758 **squared regiment** squadron

By place or choice the worthiest; they anon
 With hundreds and with thousands trooping came
 Attended: all access was thronged; the gates
 And porches wide, but chief the spacious hall
 (Though like a covered field, where champions bold
 Wont ride in armed, and at the Soldan’s chair
 Defied the best of Paynim° chivalry
 To mortal combat, or career with lance)
 Thick swarmed, both on the ground and in the air,
 Brushed with the hiss of rustling wings. As bees°
 In springtime, when the Sun with Taurus° rides,
 Pour forth their populous youth about the hive
 In clusters; they among fresh dews and flowers
 Fly to and fro, or on the smoothed plank,
 The suburb of their straw-built citadel,
 New rubbed with balm, expatiate,° and confer
 Their state-affairs: so thick the aery crowd
 Swarmed and were straitened; till, the signal given,°
 Behold a wonder! they but now who seemed
 In bigness to surpass Earth’s giant sons,
 Now less than smallest dwarfs, in narrow room
 Throng numberless, like that° pygmean race
 Beyond the Indian mount; or faëry elves,
 Whose midnight revels by a forest-side
 Or fountain some belated peasant sees,
 Or dreams he sees, while overhead the Moon
 Sits arbitress and nearer to the Earth
 Wheels her pale course: they, on their mirth and dance
 Intent, with jocund music charm his ear;
 At once with joy and fear his heart rebounds.
 Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms
 Reduced their shapes immense, and were at large,
 Though without number still, amidst the hall
 Of that infernal court. But far within,
 And in their own dimensions like themselves,
 The great Seraphic Lords and Cherubim

765 **Paynim** pagan 768 **As bees** a simile made familiar by Homer and Virgil 769
Taurus The sign of the Bull is entered by the sun in April. 774 **expatiate** walk
 abroad (Latin) 776 **signal given** cf. 347 780 **that** Latin *ille*, the famous

In close recess and secret conclave sat,
 A thousand demi-gods on golden seats,
 Frequent° and full. After short silence then,
 And summons read, the great consult began.

797 **Frequent** in the Latin sense of crowded

BOOK II

THE ARGUMENT

The consultation begun, Satan debates whether another battle be to be hazarded for the recovery of Heaven: some advise it, others dissuade. A third proposal is preferred, mentioned before by Satan, to search the truth of that prophecy or tradition in Heaven concerning another world, and another kind of creature, equal, or not much inferior, to themselves, about this time to be created. Their doubt who shall be sent on this difficult search: Satan, their chief, undertakes alone the voyage; is honoured and applauded. The council thus ended, the rest betake them several ways and to several employments, as their inclinations lead them, to entertain the time till Satan return. He passes on his journey to Hell-gates; finds them shut, and who sat there to guard them; by whom at length they are opened, and discover to him the great gulf between Hell and Heaven; with what difficulty he passes through, directed by Chaos, the Power of that place, to the sight of this new World which he sought.

HIGH on a throne of royal state, which far^o
Outshone the wealth of Ormus^o and of Ind,^o
Or where the gorgeous East with richest hand
Showers on her kings barbaric pearl and gold,

1-5 Compare Spenser's *Lucifera*, *Pride* (*Faerie Queene*, I, iv, 8): High above all a
cloth of state was spread,/ And a rich throne, as bright as sunny day,/ On which there
sate, most brave embellished/ With royal robes and gorgeous array,/ A maiden
queen, that shone as Titan's ray,/ In glistening gold and peerless precious stone. 2
Ormus island that was chief mart for Persian Gulf area **Ind** India

Satan exalted sat, by merit raised^o
To that bad eminence; and, from despair
Thus high uplifted beyond hope, aspires
Beyond thus high, insatiate to pursue
Vain^o war with Heaven; and, by success untaught,^o
His proud imaginations thus displayed:
 'Powers and Dominions, Deities of Heaven!
For, since no deep within her gulf can hold
Immortal vigour, though oppressed and fallen,
I give not Heaven for lost: from this descent
Celestial Virtues rising will appear
More glorious and more dread than from no fall,
And trust themselves to fear no second fate:
Me though just right, and the fixed laws of Heaven,
Did first create your leader, next, free choice,
With what besides, in council or in fight,
Hath been achieved of merit, yet this loss,
Thus far at least recovered, hath much more
Established in a safe, unenvied throne,
Yielded with full consent. The happier state
In Heaven, which follows dignity, might draw
Envy from each inferior, but who here
Will envy whom the highest place exposes
Foremost to stand against the Thunderer's aim
Your bulwark, and condemns to greatest share
Of endless pain? Where there is, then, no good
For which to strive, no strife can grow up there
From faction, for none sure will claim in Hell
Precedence, none, whose portion is so small
Of present pain that with ambitious mind
Will covet more. With this advantage, then,

To union, and firm faith, and firm accord,

5 Each is where he deserves to be on the chain of being. Satan is at “the highest place” (27) of an inverted scale, furthest from good. The doctrine of merit extends upwards to Christ, “By merit more than birthright Son of God,” iii, 309. Satan has merely Oriental pomp, which “in the fifth line . . . is pricked with the derisive collocation of sounds in ‘Satan exalted sat,’ and all his gas escapes in sibilance and near-rhyme” (J. B. Broadbent). 9 **Vain** same double meaning as in i, 44 **by success untaught** i.e., not having learned by experience. *Success* means *outcome*, good or bad.

More than can be in Heaven, we now return
To claim our just inheritance of old,
Surer to prosper than prosperity
Could have assured us, and by what best way,
Whether of open war or covert guile,
We now debate; who can advise, may speak.[°]
He ceased; and next him Moloch, sceptred king,[°]
Stood up, the strongest and the fiercest Spirit
That fought in Heaven, now fiercer by despair.
His trust was with the Eternal to be deemed
Equal in strength, and rather than be less
Cared not to be at all; with that care lost
Went all his fear: of God, or Hell, or worse,
He recked not, and these words thereafter spake:
‘My sentence[°] is for open war. Of wiles,
More unexpert, I boast not: them let those
Contrive who need, or when they need, not now;
For, while they sit contriving, shall the rest—
Millions that stand in arms, and longing wait
The signal to ascend—sit lingering here,
Heaven’s fugitives, and for their dwelling-place
Accept this dark opprobrious den of shame,
The prison of his tyranny who reigns
By our delay? No! let us rather choose,
Armed with Hell-flames and fury, all at once
O’er Heaven’s high towers to force resistless way,
Turning our tortures into horrid arms
Against the Torturer; when, to meet the noise
Of his almighty engine, he shall hear
Infernal thunder, and, for lightning, see
Black fire and horror shot with equal rage
Among his Angels, and his throne itself
Mixed with Tartarean[°] sulphur and strange fire,
His own invented torments. But perhaps
The way seems difficult, and steep to scale
With upright wing against a higher foe.
Let such bethink them, if the sleepy drench
Of that forgetful lake benumb not still,

43 **Moloch, sceptred king** Milton keeps iterating the etymology of Moloch. 51 **sentence** opinion (Latin *sententia*) 69 **Tartarean** Tartarus was a place of punishment below Hades even.

That in our proper[°] motion we ascend
Up to our native seat; descent and fall
To us is adverse. Who but felt of late,
When the fierce foe hung on our broken rear
Insulting, and pursued us through the Deep,
With what compulsion and laborious flight
We sunk thus low? The ascent is easy, then;[°]
The event[°] is feared! Should we again provoke

Our stronger, some worse way his wrath may find
 To our destruction, if there be in Hell
 Fear to be worse destroyed! What can be worse
 Than to dwell here, driven out from bliss, condemned
 In this abhorred deep to utter woe,
 Where pain of unextinguishable fire
 Must exercise° us without hope of end°
 The vassals of his anger, when the scourge
 Inexorably, and the torturing hour,
 Calls us to penance? More destroyed than thus.
 We should be quite abolished, and expire.
 What fear we then? what doubt we° to incense
 His utmost ire? which, to the height enraged,
 Will either quite consume us, and reduce
 To nothing this essential°—happier far
 Than miserable to have eternal being—
 Or, if our substance be indeed divine,
 And cannot cease to be, we are at worst
 On this side nothing; and by proof we feel
 Our power sufficient to disturb his Heaven,
 And with perpetual inroads to alarm,
 Though inaccessible, his fatal° throne:
 Which, if not victory, is yet revenge.’
 He ended frowning, and his look denounced
 Desperate revenge and battle dangerous
 To less than gods. On the other side up rose

75 **proper** natural, characteristic 81 **The ascent is easy, then** opposite of the famous
 warning of the Sibyl, “The descent to Hell is easy” (“facilis descensus Averno”)
Aeneid, VI, 126. Cf. iii, 524 82 **event** same meaning as at i, 624 89 **exercise** has the
 Latin force of torture. **without hope of end** referring doubly to no end of pain and
 no end of existence 94 **what doubt we** Why do we hesitate? 97 **essential** essence
 104 **fatal** fated

Belial, in act more graceful and humane;
 A fairer person lost not Heaven; he seemed
 For dignity composed, and high exploit,
 But all was false and hollow, though his tongue
 Dropped manna, and could make the worse appear
 The better reason, to perplex and dash
 Maturest counsels, for his thoughts were low,
 To vice industrious, but to nobler deeds
 Timorous and slothful; yet he pleased the ear,
 And with persuasive accent thus began:
 ‘I should be much for open war, O Peers,
 As not behind in hate, if what was urged
 Main reason to persuade immediate war
 Did not dissuade me most, and seem to cast
 Ominous conjecture on the whole success;
 When he who most excels in fact° of arms,
 In what he counsels and in what excels
 Mistrustful, grounds his courage on despair
 And utter dissolution as the scope
 Of all his aim, after some dire revenge.
 First, what revenge? The towers of Heaven are filled
 With armed watch, that render all access
 Impregnable: oft on the bordering Deep
 Encamp their legions, or with obscure wing
 Scout far and wide into the realm of Night,
 Scorning surprise. Or could we break our way
 By force, and at our heels all Hell should rise
 With blackest insurrection, to confound

Heaven's purest light, yet our great Enemy,
 All incorruptible, would on his throne
 Sit unpolluted, and the ethereal mould,
 Incapable of stain, would soon expel
 Her mischief, and purge off the baser fire,
 Victorious. Thus repulsed, our final hope
 Is flat despair: we must exasperate
 The Almighty Victor to spend all his rage,
 And that must end us, that must be our cure,
 To be no more^o—sad cure, for who would lose,

124 **fact** feat 146 The clever arguer Belial poses as Hamlet, though he is also Claudio (*Measure for Measure*, III, i, 116 ff., of which 120—21 connects with 600 below).

Though full of pain, this intellectual being,
 Those thoughts that wander through eternity,
 To perish rather, swallowed up and lost
 In the wide womb of uncreated Night,
 Devoid of sense and motion? And who knows,
 Let this be good, whether our angry Foe
 Can give it, or will ever? How he can
 Is doubtful; that he never will is sure.
 Will he, so wise, let loose at once his ire,
 Belike^o through impotence or unaware,
 To give his enemies their wish, and end
 Them in this anger whom his anger saves
 To punish endless? "Wherefore cease we, then?"
 Say they who counsel war; "we are decreed,
 Reserved, and destined to eternal woe;
 Whatever doing, what can we suffer more,
 What can we suffer worse?" Is this, then, worst—
 Thus sitting, thus consulting, thus in arms?
 What when^o we fled amain,^o pursued and struck
 With Heaven's afflicting thunder, and besought
 The Deep to shelter us? this Hell then seemed
 A refuge from those wounds. Or when we lay
 Chained on the burning lake? that sure was worse.
 What if the breath that kindled those grim fires,
 Awaked, should blow them into sevenfold rage,
 And plunge us in the flames, or from above
 Should intermitted vengeance arm again
 His red right hand^o to plague us? What if all
 Her stores were opened, and this firmament
 Of Hell should spout her cataracts of fire,
 Impendent horrors, threatening hideous fall
 One day upon our heads, while we perhaps,
 Designing or exhorting glorious war,
 Caught in a fiery tempest, shall be hurled,
 Each on his rock transfixed, the sport and prey
 Of racking whirlwinds, or forever sunk
 Under yon boiling ocean, wrapt in chains,

156 **Belike** in all likelihood 165 **What when** *what about when* is the modern idiom.
amain under great force 174 **His red right hand** an expression first applied by
 Horace to Jupiter

There to converse with everlasting groans,
 Unrespited, unpitied, unreprieved,
 Ages of hopeless end? This would be worse.
 War, therefore, open or concealed, alike
 My voice dissuades; for what can force or guile^o

With him, or who deceive his mind, whose eye
 Views all things at one view? He from Heaven's height
 All these our motions vain sees and derides,
 Not more almighty to resist our might
 Than wise to frustrate all our plots and wiles.
 Shall we, then, live thus vile, the race of Heaven,
 Thus trampled, thus expelled, to suffer here
 Chains and these torments? Better these than worse,
 By my advice; since fate inevitable
 Subdues us, and omnipotent decree,
 The Victor's will. To suffer, as to do,
 Our strength is equal, nor the law unjust
 That so ordains; this was at first resolved,
 If we were wise, against so great a foe
 Contending, and so doubtful what might fall.
 I laugh when those who at the spear are bold
 And venturous, if that fail them, shrink, and fear
 What yet they know must follow—to endure
 Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain,
 The sentence of their conqueror. This is now
 Our doom, which if we can sustain and bear,
 Our Súpreme Foe in time may much remit
 His anger, and perhaps, thus far removed,
 Not mind us not offending, satisfied
 With what is punished; whence these raging fires
 Will slacken, if his breath stir not their flames.
 Our purer essence then will overcome
 Their noxious vapour, or, inured, not feel;
 Or, changed at length, and to the place conformed
 In temper and in nature, will receive
 Familiar the fierce heat, and void of pain;
 This horror will grow mild, this darkness light;
 Besides what hope the never-ending flight
 Of future days may bring, what chance, what change
 Worth waiting, since our present lot appears

188 **force or guile** cf. i, 121

For happy though but ill, for ill not worst,
 If we procure not to ourselves more woe.'
 Thus Belial, with words clothed in reason's garb,
 Counsell'd ignoble ease and peaceful sloth,
 Not peace; and after him thus Mammon spake:
 'Either to disenthroned the King of Heaven
 We war, if war be best, or to regain
 Our own right lost. Him to unthroned we then
 May hope when everlasting Fate shall yield
 To fickle Chance, and Chaos judge the strife,
 The former vain to hope argues as vain
 The latter, for what place can be for us
 Within Heaven's bound unless Heaven's Lord Supreme
 We overpower? Suppose he should relent,
 And publish grace to all, on promise made
 Of new subjection; with what eyes could we
 Stand in his presence humble and receive
 Strict laws imposed, to celebrate his throne
 With warbled hymns and to his Godhead sing
 Forced Halleluiahs, while he lordly sits
 Our envied sovran and his altar breathes
 Ambrosial odours and ambrosial flowers,
 Our servile offerings? This must be our task
 In Heaven, this our delight. How wearisome

Eternity so spent in worship paid
 To whom we hate! Let us not then pursue,
 By force impossible, by leave obtained
 Unacceptable, though in Heaven, our state
 Of splendid vassalage, but rather seek^o
 Our own good from ourselves, and from our own
 Live to ourselves, though in this vast recess,
 Free and to none accountable, preferring
 Hard liberty before the easy yoke
 Of servile pomp. Our greatness will appear
 Then most conspicuous when great things of small,
 Useful of hurtful, prosperous of adverse,
 We can create, and in what place soe'er
 Thrive under evil, and work ease out of pain

249-52 The meaning is, Let us not seek to win a state unattainable by force and unacceptable if given to us by Heaven's permission, for it still means bondage.

Through labour and endurance. This deep world
 Of darkness do we dread? How oft amidst
 Thick clouds and dark doth Heaven's all-ruling Sire
 Choose to reside, his glory unobscured,
 And with the majesty of darkness round
 Covers his throne, from whence deep thunders roar,
 Mustering their rage, and Heaven resembles Hell!
 As he our darkness, cannot we his light
 Imitate when we please? This desert soil
 Wants not her hidden lustre, gems and gold,^o
 Nor want we skill or art from whence to raise
 Magnificence—and what can Heaven show more?
 Our torments also may, in length of time,
 Become our elements, these piercing fires
 As soft as now severe, our temper changed
 Into their temper; which must needs remove
 The sensible^o of pain. All things invite
 To peaceful counsels, and the settled state
 Of order, how in safety best we may
 Compose our present evils, with regard
 Of what we are and where.^o dismissing quite
 All thoughts of war. Ye have what I advise.'

He scarce had finished when such murmur filled
 The assembly as when hollow rocks retain
 The sound of blustering winds, which all night long
 Had roused the sea, now with hoarse cadence lull
 Seafaring men o'erwatched,^o whose bark by chance.
 Or pinnacle, anchors in a craggy bay
 After the tempest. Such applause was heard
 As Mammon ended, and his sentence pleased,
 Advising peace, for such another field
 They dreaded worse than Hell, so much the fear
 Of thunder and the sword of Michael
 Wrought still within them, and no less desire
 To found this nether empire, which might rise,
 By policy and long process of time,
 In emulation opposite to Heaven.

271 **gems and gold** cf. i. 538 278 **sensible** sensibility. sense 282 **where** 1674 reads *were*. 288 **o'erwatched** wearied with watching ("overwatched and wearied out." *Samson Agonistes*, 405)

Which when Beëlzebub perceived—than whom,
 Satan except, none higher sat—with grave

Aspect he rose, and in his rising seemed
 A pillar of state; deep on his front engraven
 Deliberation sat,^o and public care,
 And princely counsel in his face yet shone,
 Majestic, though in ruin; sage he stood,
 With Atlantean^o shoulders, fit to bear
 The weight of mightiest monarchies; his look
 Drew audience and attention still as night
 Or summer's noontide air, while thus he spake:
 'Thrones and Imperial Powers, Offspring of Heaven,
 Ethereal Virtues! or these titles now
 Must we renounce, and, changing style, be called
 Princes of Hell? for so the popular vote
 Inclines, here to continue, and build up here
 A growing empire—doubtless! while we dream,
 And know not that the King of Heaven hath doomed
 This place our dungeon, not our safe retreat
 Beyond his potent arm, to live exempt
 From Heaven's high jurisdiction in new league
 Banded against his throne, but to remain
 In strictest bondage, though thus far removed,^o
 Under the inevitable curb, reserved
 His captive multitude. For he, be sure,
 In height or depth, still first and last will reign
 Sole king, and of his kingdom lose no part
 By our revolt, but over Hell extend
 His empire, and with iron sceptre rule
 Us here, as with his golden those in Heaven.^o
 What^o sit we then projecting peace and war?
 War hath determined us and foiled with loss
 Irreparable, terms of peace yet none
 Vouchsafed or sought; for what peace will be given
 To us enslaved, but custody severe,
 And stripes, and arbitrary punishment
 Inflicted? and what peace can we return,

303 Cf. "care/ Sat on his faded cheek," i, 601 ff. 306 **Atlantean** Atlas the Titan bore
 up the heavens. 321 **thus far removed** a contemptuous echo of Belial (211) 327-28
 Cf. "Lycidas," 111. 329 **What** why (Quid)

But, to our power, hostility and hate,
 Untamed reluctance, and revenge, though slow,
 Yet ever plotting how the Conqueror least
 May reap his conquest, and may least rejoice
 In doing what we most in suffering feel?
 Nor will occasion want, nor shall we need
 With dangerous expedition to invade
 Heaven, whose high walls fear no assault or siege,
 Or ambush from the Deep. What if we find
 Some easier enterprise? There is a place
 (If ancient and prophetic fame in Heaven
 Err not), another World, the happy seat
 Of some new race, called Man, about this time
 To be created like to us, though less
 In power and excellence, but favoured more
 Of him who rules above; so was his will
 Pronounced among the Gods, and by an oath
 That shook Heaven's whole circumference confirmed.^o
 Thither let us bend all our thoughts, to learn
 What creatures there inhabit, of what mould
 Or substance, how endued, and what their power,
 And where their weakness, how attempted best,

By force or subtlety. Though Heaven be shut,
 And Heaven's high Arbitrator sit secure
 In his own strength, this place may lie exposed,
 The utmost border of his kingdom, left
 To their defence who hold it; here, perhaps,
 Some advantageous act may be achieved
 By sudden onset, either with Hell-fire
 To waste his whole creation, or possess
 All as our own, and drive, as we were driven,
 The puny^o habitants, or, if not drive,
 Seduce them to our party, that their God
 May prove their foe, and with repenting hand
 Abolish his own works. This would surpass
 Common revenge, and interrupt his joy

352-53 The chief Olympian so swears in the *Aeneid* and the *Iliad*, but this is biblical too, Genesis xxii, 16; Isaiah xlv, 23; Hebrews vi. 13; etc. 367 **puny** Milton doubtless is remembering the etymology *puis né*, later born.

In our confusion, and our joy upraise
 In his disturbance, when his darling sons,
 Hurl'd headlong^o to partake with us, shall curse
 Their frail originals,^o and faded bliss,
 Faded so soon! Advise if this be worth
 Attempting, or to sit in darkness here
 Hatching vain empires.' Thus Beëlzebub
 Pleaded his devilish counsel, first devised
 By Satan, and in part proposed—for whence
 But from the author of all ill could spring
 So deep a malice, to confound the race
 Of mankind in one root, and Earth with Hell
 To mingle and involve, done all to spite
 The great Creator? But their spite still serves
 His glory to augment. The bold design
 Pleas'd highly those Infernal States, and joy
 Sparkled in all their eyes: with full assent
 They vote, whereat his speech he thus renews:
 'Well have ye judged, well ended long debate,
 Synod of Gods, and, like to what ye are,
 Great things resolved, which from the lowest deep
 Will once more lift us up, in spite of fate,
 Nearer our ancient seat—perhaps in view
 Of those bright confines, whence, with neighbouring arms,
 And opportune excursion, we may chance
 Re-enter Heaven, or else in some mild zone
 Dwell, not unvisited of Heaven's fair light
 Secure, and at the brightening orient beam
 Purge off this gloom: the soft delicious air,
 To heal the scar of those corrosive fires,
 Shall breathe her balm. But, first, whom shall we send^o
 In search of this new world? whom shall we find
 Sufficient? who shall tempt^o with wandering feet
 The dark, unbottomed, infinite abyss,
 And through the palpable obscure find out
 His uncouth^o way, or spread his aery flight,

374 **Hurl'd headlong** cf. i, 45 375 **originals** 1674 has the singular. 402 An ironic echo of Isaiah vi, 8: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me." 404 **tempt** attempt 407 **uncouth** unknown; cf. 827

Upborne with indefatigable wings

Over the vast abrupt, ere he arrive
 The happy isle? What strength, what art, can then
 Suffice, or what evasion bear him safe
 Through the strict senteries and stations thick
 Of Angels watching round? Here he had need
 All circumspection,^o and we now no less
 Choice in our suffrage, for on whom we send
 The weight of all, and our last hope, relies.'

This said, he sat, and expectation held
 His look suspense, awaiting who appeared
 To second, or oppose, or undertake
 The perilous attempt. But all sat mute,^o
 Pondering the danger with deep thoughts, and each
 In other's countenance read his own dismay,
 Astonished. None among the choice and prime
 Of those Heaven-warring champions could be found
 So hardy as to proffer or accept,
 Alone, the dreadful voyage; till, at last,
 Satan, whom now transcendent glory raised
 Above his fellows, with monarchal pride
 Conscious of highest worth, unmoved thus spake:

'O Progeny of Heaven! Empyrean Thrones!
 With reason hath deep silence and demur
 Seized us, though undismayed: long is the way
 And hard that out of Hell leads up to light;
 Our prison strong, this huge convex of fire,
 Outrageous to devour, immures us round
 Ninefold; and gates of burning adamant,
 Barred over us, prohibit all egress.
 These passed, if any pass, the void profound
 Of unessential^o Night receives him next,
 Wide-gaping, and with utter loss of being
 Threatens him, plunged in that abortive^o gulf.
 If thence he 'scape, into whatever world,
 Or unknown region, what remains him less

414 **circumspection** figurative and literal, *looking all around* 420 ff. This is parallel to the embarrassing question of who shall fight Hector, *Iliad*, VII, 92 ff. It is also parallel to iii, 217 ff. 439 **unessential** uncreated (cf. 150) 441 **abortive** from which arises nothing, or nothing but the monstrous

Than unknown dangers, and as hard escape?
 But I should ill become this throne, O Peers,
 And this imperial sovranity, adorned
 With splendour, armed with power, if aught proposed
 And judged of public moment in the shape
 Of difficulty or danger could deter
 Me from attempting. Wherefore do I assume
 These royalties, and not refuse to reign,
 Refusing to accept as great a share
 Of hazard as of honour, due alike
 To him who reigns, and so much to him due
 Of hazard more as he above the rest
 High honoured sits? Go, therefore, mighty Powers,
 Terror of Heaven, though fallen; intend^o at home,
 While here shall be our home, what best may ease
 The present misery, and render Hell
 More tolerable, if there be cure or charm
 To respite, or deceive, or slack the pain
 Of this ill mansion; intermit no watch
 Against a wakeful foe, while I abroad
 Through all the coasts of dark destruction seek

Deliverance for us all: this enterprise
 None shall partake with me.' Thus saying, rose
 The Monarch, and prevented all reply;
 Prudent, lest, from his resolution raised,
 Others among the chief might offer now,
 Certain to be refused, what erst they feared,
 And, so refused, might in opinion stand
 His rivals, winning cheap the high repute
 Which he through hazard huge must earn. But they
 Dreaded not more the adventure than his voice
 Forbidding; and at once with him they rose.
 Their rising all at once was as the sound
 Of thunder heard remote. Towards him they bend
 With awful reverence prone, and as a God
 Extol him equal to the Highest in Heaven.
 Nor failed they to express how much they praised
 That for the general safety he despised
 His own; for neither do the Spirits damned
 Lose all their virtue, lest bad men should boast

457 **intend** deliberate

Their specious deeds on earth, which glory excites,
 Or close ambition varnished o'er with zeal.
 Thus they their doubtful consultations dark
 Ended, rejoicing in their matchless chief:
 As when from mountain-tops the dusky clouds
 Ascending, while the north wind sleeps, o'erspread
 Heaven's cheerful face,° the louring element
 Scowls o'er the darkened landscape snow, or shower,
 If chance the radiant sun, with farewell sweet,
 Extend his evening beam, the fields revive,
 The birds their notes renew, and bleating herds
 Attest their joy, that hill and valley rings.
 O shame to men! Devil with devil damned
 Firm concord holds; men only disagree
 Of creatures rational, though under hope
 Of heavenly grace, and, God proclaiming peace,
 Yet live in hatred, enmity, and strife
 Among themselves, and levy cruel wars,
 Wasting the earth, each other to destroy—
 As if (which might induce us to accord)
 Man had not hellish foes enough besides,
 That day and night for his destruction wait.

The Stygian council thus dissolved, and forth
 In order came the grand Infernal Peers;
 Midst came their mighty Paramount,° and seemed
 Alone the antagonist of Heaven, nor less
 Than Hell's dread Emperor, with pomp supreme,
 And godlike imitated state; him round
 A globe of fiery Seraphim enclosed
 With bright emblazonry and horrent° arms.
 Then of their session ended they bid cry
 With trumpet's regal sound the great result:
 Toward the four winds four speedy Cherubim
 Put to their mouths the sounding alchemy
 By herald's voice explained; the hollow abyss
 Heard far and wide, and all the host of Hell
 With deafening shout returned them loud acclaim.
 Thence more at ease their minds, and somewhat raised

490 **Heaven's cheerful face** a phrase from Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, II, xii, 34. 7 508
Paramount chief 513 **horrent** bristling (cf. i. 563)

By false presumptuous hope, the rangèd Powers
 Disband, and, wandering, each his several way
 Pursues, as inclination or sad choice
 Leads him perplexed, where he may likeliest find
 Truce to his restless thoughts, and entertain
 The irksome hours till his great chief return.
 Part on the plain, or in the air sublime,^o
 Upon the wing or in swift race contend,
 As at the Olympian games or Pythian fields;^o
 Part curb their fiery steeds, or shun the goal
 With rapid wheels, or fronted brigades form:
 As when, to warn proud cities, war appears
 Waged in the troubled sky, and armies rush
 To battle in the clouds; before each van^o
 Prick forth the aery knights, and couch their spears,
 Till thickest legions close; with feats of arms
 From either end of heaven the welkin^o burns.
 Others, with vast Typhoean^o rage, more fell,
 Rend up both rocks and hills, and ride the air
 In whirlwind; Hell scarce holds the wild uproar:
 As when Alcides,^o from Oechalia crowned
 With conquest, felt the envenomed robe, and tore
 Through pain up by the roots Thessalian pines,
 And Lichas from the top of Oeta threw
 Into the Euboic sea. Others, more mild,
 Retreated in a silent valley, sing
 With notes angelical to many a harp
 Their own heroic deeds, and hapless fall
 By doom of battle, and complain that Fate
 Free Virtue should enthrall to Force or Chance.
 Their song was partial;^o but the harmony

528 **sublime** uplifted 530 **Pythian fields** south of Delphi, where the Pythian Games
 were held 535 **van** vanguard 538 **welkin** sky 539 **Typhoean** Typhon (cf. i, 199),
 after his defeat by Zeus, was placed under Mount Aetna, whence he causes
 eruptions. 542 ff. Alcides is Hercules, who, after defeating and slaying Eurytus the
 king of Oechalia in Thessaly, became the victim of a deceit, a poisoned robe
 innocently brought by an attendant, Lichas, whom the hero, in his dying frenzy,
 hurled to destruction. 552 **partial** prejudiced in their own favor, like the previous
 statements of the fallen leaders

(What could it less when Spirits immortal^o sing?)
 Suspended Hell, and took with ravishment
 The thronging audience. In discourse more sweet
 (For Eloquence the Soul, Song charms the Sense)
 Others apart sat on a hill retired,
 In thoughts more elevate, and reasoned high
 Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate—
 Fixed fate, free will, foreknowledge absolute—
 And found no end, in wandering mazes lost.
 Of good and evil much they argued then,
 Of happiness and final misery,
 Passion and apathy, and glory and shame—
 Vain wisdom all, and false philosophy!—
 Yet, with a pleasing sorcery, could charm
 Pain for a while or anguish, and excite
 Fallacious hope, or arm the obdurèd breast
 With stubborn patience as with triple steel.

Another part, in squadrons and gross^o bands,
 On bold adventure to discover wide^o
 That dismal world, if any clime perhaps
 Might yield them easier habitation, bend
 Four ways their flying march, along the banks
 Of four infernal rivers, that disgorge
 Into the burning lake^o their baleful streams:
 Abhorred Styx,^o the flood of deadly hate;
 Sad Acheron of sorrow, black and deep;
 Cocytus, named of lamentation loud
 Heard on the rueful stream; fierce Phlegethon,
 Whose waves of torrent fire inflame with rage.
 Far off from these, a slow and silent stream,
 Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
 Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
 Forthwith his former state and being forgets,
 Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain.
 Beyond this flood a frozen continent
 Lies dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms

553 **Spirits immortal** cf. “immortal Spirits,” i, 622 570 **gross** compact 571 **discover wide** i, 724 ends with the same words. 576 **the burning lake** cf. “Chained on the burning lake,” i, 210; ii, 169 577-83 Each of the five names is followed by its etymology—*hate, sorrow, lamentation, fire, oblivion*.

Of whirlwind and dire hail, which on firm land
 Thaws not, but gathers heap, and ruin seems
 Of ancient pile;^o all else deep snow and ice,
 A gulf profound as that Serbonian bog^o
 Betwixt Damiata and Mount Casius old,
 Where armies whole have sunk: the parching air
 Burns frore,^o and cold performs the effect of fire.
 Thither, by harpy-footed Furies haled,
 At certain revolutions all the damned
 Are brought, and feel by turns the bitter change
 Of fierce extremes, extremes by change more fierce,
 From beds of raging fire^o to starve^o in ice
 Their soft ethereal warmth, and there to pine
 Immovable, infixed, and frozen round
 Periods of time, thence hurried back to fire.
 They ferry over this Lethean sound
 Both to and fro, their sorrow to augment,
 And wish and struggle, as they pass, to reach
 The tempting stream, with one small drop to lose
 In sweet forgetfulness all pain and woe,
 All in one moment, and so near the brink;
 But Fate withstands, and, to oppose the attempt,
 Medusa^o with Gorgonian terror guards
 The ford, and of itself the water flies
 All taste of living wight, as once it fled
 The lip of Tantalus.^o Thus roving on
 In confused march forlorn, the adventurous bands,
 With shuddering horror pale and eyes aghast,

591 **pile** building 592 Referring to a treacherous mixture of sand and water on the coast of Lower Egypt described by Diodorus Siculus, who said, “many, unacquainted with the nature of the place, by missing their way, have been there swallowed up, together with whole armies.” 595 **frore** frozen (the old past participle; cf. German *gefroren*) 600 **raging fire** plural at 213 **starve** The original meaning was perish. 611 **Medusa** one of three monstrous sisters, the Gorgons (cf. 628). Odysseus feared on his visit to Hades she would turn him into stone, as the mere sight of them was capable of doing. 614 **Tantalus** Having incurred the

displeasure of Zeus, he received in Hades the punishment that led to the word *tantalize*; cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 496-501. Of course *once*, 613, is an anachronism, like *i*, 550.

Viewed first their lamentable lot, and found
No rest. Through many a dark and dreary vale
They passed, and many a region dolorous,^o
O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of
death—

A universe of death, which God by curse
Created evil, for evil only good;
Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,
Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things,
Abominable, unutterable, and worse
Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived,
Gorgons, and Hydras,^o and Chimaeras^o dire.

Meanwhile the Adversary of God and Man,
Satan, with thoughts inflamed of highest design,
Puts on swift wings, and toward the gates of Hell
Explores his solitary flight: sometimes
He scours the right-hand coast, sometimes the left:
Now shares with level wing the deep, then soars
Up to the fiery concave towering high.
As when far off at sea a fleet descried
Hangs in the clouds, by equinoctial winds
Close sailing from Bengala,^o or the isles
Of Ternate and Tidore,^o whence merchants bring
Their spicy drugs; they on the trading flood,
Through the wide Ethiopian to the Cape,^o
Ply stemming nightly toward the pole: so seemed
Far off^o the flying Fiend. At last appear
Hell-bounds, high reaching to the horrid roof,
And thrice threefold the gates; three folds were brass,
Three iron, three of adamant rock,
Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire

619 **region dolorous** a Dantean echo, "città dolente," *Inferno*, III, i 628 **Hydras** many-headed snakes **Chimaeras** firebreathing monsters (given the same adjective at "Comus," 517). The same list is in *Aeneid* VI, 287- 89. 638 **Bengala** Bengal, in Milton's day part of the Mogul Empire 639 **Ternate and Tidore** "Spice Islands" in the East Indies in the Molucca Sea 641 Through the Indian Ocean to the Cape of Good Hope 643 **Far off** characteristic adverbial expression, 636, 582

Yet unconsumed. Before the gates there sat^o
On either side a formidable Shape;
The one seemed woman to the waist, and fair,
But ended foul in many a scaly fold,
Voluminous^o and vast, a serpent armed
With mortal sting. About her middle round
A cry^o of Hell-hounds never-ceasing barked
With wide Cerberean^o mouths full loud, and rung
A hideous peal, yet, when they list, would creep,
If aught disturbed their noise, into her womb,
And kennel there, yet there still barked and howled
Within unseen. Far less abhorred than these
Vexed Scylla, bathing in the sea that parts
Calabria from the hoarse Trinacrian shore,^o
Nor uglier follow the night-hag, when, called
In secret, riding through the air she comes,
Lured with the smell of infant blood, to dance

With Lapland° witches, while the labouring moon
 Eclipses at their charms. The other Shape—
 If shape it might be called that shape had none
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb,
 Or substance might be called that shadow seemed,
 For each seemed either—black it stood as Night,

648 ff. The prime impetus for the allegory of Sin and Death comes from James i, 15: “Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.” Further influences were the myth of Scylla (made a symbol of sin by St. John Chrysostom), Pallas Athene’s birth from the head of Zeus (note 757-58), and Spenser’s picturizations of Error and Death (*F.Q.*, I, i, 14; VII, vii, 46). 652 **Voluminous** literally, in rolls (*volumina*) 654 cry means *pack*. 655 Cerberus was the three-headed dog that guarded the threshold of Hades. Milton is following Ovid’s description of Scylla (*Met.* XIV, 65). 660-61 Geographically, *Scylla* is a rock on the Italian side of the Strait of Messina, opposite Charybdis on the Sicilian side; once a lovely nymph whom Circe, her rival for Glaucus’s love, made a monster from the waist down, beset by barking dogs. 665 Lapland, by which “Russia is bounded on the north” (Milton’s *History of Muscovia*), surpassed “all nations in the world” for witches, according to Hakluyt. They had magical power over the moon, the very word “labouring” echoing Virgilian and Juvenalian phrases meaning eclipse.

Fierce as ten Furies, terrible as Hell,
 And shook a dreadful dart; what seemed his head
 The likeness of a kingly crown had on.
 Satan was now at hand, and from his seat
 The monster moving onward came as fast
 With horrid strides; Hell trembled as he strode.
 The undaunted Fiend what this might be admired°—
 Admired, not feared; God and his Son except,
 Created thing naught valued he nor shunned;
 And with disdainful look thus first began:

‘Whence and what art thou, execrable Shape,
 That dar’st, though grim and terrible, advance
 Thy miscreated front athwart my way
 To yonder gates? Through them I mean to pass,
 That be assured, without leave asked of thee.
 Retire, or taste thy folly, and learn by proof,
 Hell-born, not to contend with Spirits of Heaven.’

To whom the Goblin, full of wrath, replied:
 ‘Art thou that Traitor Angel, art thou he
 Who first broke peace in Heaven and faith, till then
 Unbroken,° and in proud rebellious arms
 Drew after him the third part of Heaven’s sons,
 Conjured against the Highest, for which both thou
 And they, outcast from God, are here condemned
 To waste eternal days in woe and pain?
 And reck’n’st thou thyself with Spirits of Heaven,
 Hell-doomed,° and breath’st defiance here and scorn,
 Where I reign king, and, to enrage thee more,
 Thy king and lord? Back to thy punishment,
 False fugitive, and to thy speed add wings,
 Lest with a whip of scorpions I pursue
 Thy lingering, or with one stroke of this dart
 Strange horror seize thee, and pangs unfelt before.’

So spake the grisly Terror, and in shape,
 So speaking and so threatening, grew tenfold
 More dreadful and deform. On the other side,
 Incensed with indignation, Satan stood

677 **admired** wondered 691 **Unbroken** There is profit in the ambiguity of this participle’s reference—i.e., it fits “he” almost as well as “peace . . . and faith.” 697

Unterrified, and like a comet burned
That fires the length of Ophiuchus^o huge
In the arctic sky, and from his horrid hair^o
Shakes pestilence and war. Each at the head
Levelled his deadly aim; their fatal hands
No second stroke intend, and such a frown
Each cast at the other as when two black clouds,
With Heaven’s artillery fraught, come rattling on
Over the Caspian, then stand front to front
Hovering a space, till winds the signal blow
To join their dark encounter in mid-air:^o
So frowned the mighty combatants, that Hell
Grew darker at their frown; so matched they stood;
For never but once more was either like
To meet so great a foe:^o and now great deeds
Had been achieved, whereof all Hell had rung,
Had not the snaky Sorceress that sat
Fast by Hell-gate and kept the fatal key
Risen, and with hideous outcry rushed between.

‘O Father, what intends thy hand,’ she cried,
‘Against thy only son? What fury, O son,
Possesses thee to bend that mortal dart
Against thy father’s head? and know’st for whom?
For him who sits above, and laughs the while
At thee, ordained his drudge to execute
Whate’er his wrath, which he calls justice, bids,
His wrath, which one day will destroy ye both!’

She spake, and at her words the hellish Pest
Forbore, then these to her Satan returned:

‘So strange thy outcry, and thy words so strange
Thou interposest, that my sudden hand,
Prevented, spares to tell thee yet by deeds
What it intends, till first I know of thee

709 **Ophiuchus** “serpent-bearer,” a big northern constellation (evil, like barbaric invasion, comes from the north: cf. v, 689) 710 **hair** *Comet* derives from a Greek word meaning long-haired, the reference being to its tail. 712-18 cf. vi, 310-18 721-22 1 Corinthians, xv, 25-26 explains that Christ “must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death;” cf. 734. 722 **so great a foe** The opponent was so identified at 202 (and compare i, 122).

What thing thou art, thus double-formed, and why,
In this infernal vale first met, thou call’st
Me father, and that phantasm call’st my son.
I know thee not, nor ever saw till now
Sight more detestable than him and thee.’

To whom thus the Portress of Hell-gate replied:
‘Hast thou forgot me, then, and do I seem
Now in thine eye so foul, once deemed so fair
In Heaven, when at the assembly, and in sight
Of all the Seraphim with thee combined
In bold conspiracy against Heaven’s King,
All on a sudden miserable pain
Surprised thee, dim thine eyes, and dizzy swum
In darkness, while thy head flames thick and fast
Threw forth, till on the left side opening wide,
Likest to thee in shape and countenance bright,
Then shining heavenly fair, a goddess armed,
Out of thy head I sprung. Amazement seized

All the host of Heaven; back they recoiled afraid
 At first, and called me Sin, and for a sign
 Portentous held me; but, familiar grown,
 I pleased, and with attractive graces won
 The most averse—thee chiefly, who, full oft
 Thyself in me thy perfect image viewing,
 Becam'st enamoured, and such joy thou took'st
 With me in secret that my womb conceived
 A growing burden. Meanwhile war arose
 And fields were fought in Heaven,^o wherein remained
 (For what could else?) to our Almighty Foe
 Clear victory, to our part loss and rout
 Through all the Empyrean. Down they fell,
 Driven headlong from the pitch of Heaven, down
 Into this deep, and in the general fall
 I also, at which time this powerful key
 Into my hand was given, with charge to keep
 These gates for ever shut, which none can pass
 Without my opening. Pensive here I sat
 Alone, but long I sat not, till my womb,
 Pregnant by thee, and now excessive grown,
 Prodigious motion felt and rueful throes.

768 **fought in Heaven** cf. 45

At last this odious offspring whom thou seest,
 Thine own begotten, breaking violent way,
 Tore through my entrails, that, with fear and pain
 Distorted, all my nether shape thus grew
 Transformed; but he my inbred enemy
 Forth issued, brandishing his fatal dart,
 Made to destroy. I fled, and cried out *Death!*
 Hell trembled^o at the hideous name, and sighed
 From all her caves, and back resounded *Death!*
 I fled; but he pursued (though more, it seems,
 Inflamed with lust than rage), and, swifter far,
 Me overtook, his mother, all dismayed,
 And, in embraces forcible and foul
 Engendering with me, of that rape begot
 These yelling monsters, that with ceaseless cry
 Surround me, as thou saw'st, hourly conceived
 And hourly born, with sorrow infinite
 To me, for, when they list, into the womb
 That bred them they return, and howl, and gnaw
 My bowels, their repast, then, bursting forth
 Afresh, with conscious terrors vex me round,
 That rest or intermission none I find.
 Before mine eyes in opposition sits
 Grim Death, my son and foe, who sets them on,
 And me, his parent, would full soon devour
 For want of other prey, but that he knows
 His end with mine involved, and knows that I
 Should prove a bitter morsel and his bane,
 Whenever that shall be: so Fate pronounced.
 But thou, O Father, I forewarn thee, shun
 His deadly arrow; neither vainly hope
 To be invulnerable in those bright arms,
 Though tempered heavenly; for that mortal dint,^o
 Save he who reigns above. none can resist.'

She finished; and the subtle Fiend his lore
 Soon learned, now milder, and thus answered smooth:
 'Dear daughter, since thou claim'st me for thy sire,
 And my fair son here show'st me, the dear pledge

788 **Hell trembled** cf. 676 813 **mortal dint** deadly stroke (“dent” is another form of the same word)

Of dalliance had with thee in Heaven, and joys
Then sweet, now sad to mention, through dire change^o
Befallen us unforeseen, unthought-of, know
I come no enemy, but to set free
From out this dark and dismal house of pain
Both him and thee, and all the heavenly host
Of Spirits that, in our just pretences armed,
Fell with us from on high. From them I go
This uncouth errand sole, and one for all
Myself expose, with lonely steps to tread
The unfounded deep, and through the void immense
To search, with wandering quest, a place foretold
Should be, and, by concurring signs, ere now
Created vast and round, a place of bliss
In the purlieu of Heaven, and therein placed
A race of upstart creatures, to supply
Perhaps our vacant room, though more removed,
Lest Heaven, surcharged with potent multitude,
Might hap to move new broils. Be this, or aught
Than this more secret, now designed, I haste
To know, and, this once known, shall soon return,
And bring ye to the place where thou and Death
Shall dwell at ease, and up and down unseen
Wing silently the buxom^o air, embalmed
With odours. There ye shall be fed and filled
Immeasurably; all things shall be your prey.’
He ceased; for both seemed highly pleased, and Death
Grinned horrible^o a ghastly smile to hear
His famine should be filled, and blessed his maw
Destined to that good hour. No less rejoiced
His mother bad, and thus bespake her sire:
‘The key of this infernal Pit, by due
And by command of Heaven’s all-powerful King
I keep, by him forbidden to unlock
These adamant gates; against all force
Death ready stands to interpose his dart,

820 **dire change** cf. i, 625 842 **buxom** yielding 846 **horrible** adverb formed from the neuter singular accusative of the adjective, as in Latin (*horribile*)

Fearless to be o’ermatched by living might.^o
But what owe I to his commands above,
Who hates me and hath hither thrust me down
Into this gloom of Tartarus profound,
To sit in hateful office here confined,
Inhabitant of Heaven and heavenly-born,
Here in perpetual agony and pain,
With terrors and with clamours compassed round
Of mine own brood, that on my bowels feed?
Thou art my father, thou my author, thou
My being gav’st me; whom should I obey
But thee? whom follow? thou wilt bring me soon
To that new world of light and bliss, among
The gods who live at ease,^o where I shall reign
At thy right hand voluptuous, as beseems
Thy daughter and thy darling, without end.’^o
Thus saying, from her side the fatal key,^o
Sad instrument of all our woe,^o she took,

And, towards the gate rolling her bestial train,
 Forthwith the huge portcullis high updrew,
 Which, but herself, not all the Stygian Powers
 Could once have moved; then in the key-hole turns
 The intricate wards, and every bolt and bar
 Of massy iron or solid rock with ease
 Unfastens. On a sudden open fly,
 With impetuous recoil and jarring sound,
 The infernal doors, and on their hinges grate
 Harsh thunder, that the lowest bottom shook
 Of Erebus. She opened, but to shut
 Excelled her power: the gates wide open stood,

855 **might** Third edition (1678) reads *wight*. 868 **The gods who live at ease** a literal translation of a Homeric expression 869-70 A blasphemous parody of the Nicene Creed: "And sitteth on the right hand of the Father: . . . whose Kingdom shall have no end." The poet has worked out in detail an Infernal Trinity as antithesis to the Heavenly Trinity. Note other correspondences between the first two books and the third, such as the two "consults" and the opposition between darkness and light. Compare the two references to "bliss," 867 and vi, 892. 871 **the fatal key** So ends l. 725. 872 **all our woe** cf. i, 3, where the phrase has greater relevance.

That with extended wings a bannered host,
 Under spread ensigns marching, might pass through
 With horse and chariots ranked in loose array;
 So wide they stood, and like a furnace-mouth
 Cast forth redounding smoke and ruddy flame.
 Before their eyes in sudden view appear
 The secrets of the hoary deep, a dark
 Illimitable ocean, without bound,
 Without dimension, where length, breadth, and height,
 And time, and place, are lost, where eldest Night
 And Chaos, ancestors of Nature, hold
 Eternal anarchy, amidst the noise
 Of endless wars, and by confusion stand.
 For Hot, Cold, Moist, and Dry, four champions fierce,^o
 Strive here for mastery, and to battle bring
 Their embryon atoms: they around the flag
 Of each his faction, in their several clans,
 Light-armed or heavy, sharp, smooth, swift, or slow,
 Swarm populous, unnumbered as the sands
 Of Barca or Cyrene's^o torrid soil,
 Levied to side with warring winds and poise
 Their lighter wings. To whom these most adhere
 He rules a moment; Chaos umpire sits,
 And by decision more embroils the fray
 By which he reigns: next him, high arbiter,
 Chance governs all. Into this wild abyss,
 The womb of Nature, and perhaps her grave,
 Of neither sea, nor shore, nor air, nor fire,
 But all these in their pregnant causes mixed
 Confusedly, and which thus must ever fight,
 Unless the Almighty Maker them ordain
 His dark materials to create more worlds—
 Into this wild abyss^o the wary Fiend

898 The strife of the four elements—Fire, Air, Water, and Earth—is a conception as old as Empedocles, the philosopher named at iii, 471. The theme of evil as confusion and confusion as evil is continuing. This is the "anarchy" outside the cosmos. 904 **Barca, Cyrene** at present two towns in Cirenaica, the part of "the Libyan sands" (i, 355) north of the Sahara 917 **Into this wild abyss** Here the poet catches a stitch in a long sentence; cf. 910.

Stood on the brink of Hell and looked a while,
 Pondering his voyage, for no narrow frith^o
 He had to cross. Nor was his ear less pealed
 With noises loud and ruinous (to compare
 Great things with small)^o than when Bellona^o storms
 With all her battering engines bent to rase
 Some capital city; or less than if this frame
 Of Heaven were falling, and these elements
 In mutiny had from her axle torn
 The steadfast Earth. At last his sail-broad vans^o
 He spreads for flight, and, in the surging smoke
 Uplifted, spurns the ground; thence many a league,
 As in a cloudy chair, ascending rides
 Audacious, but, that seat soon failing, meets
 A vast vacuity. All unawares,
 Fluttering his pennons^o vain, plumb-down he drops
 Ten thousand fathom^o deep, and to this hour
 Down had been falling, had not, by ill chance,
 The strong rebuff of some tumultuous cloud,
 Instinct with fire and nitre, hurried him
 As many miles aloft; that fury stayed,
 Quenched in a boggy Syrtis,^o neither sea
 Nor good dry land;^o nigh foundered, on he fares,
 Treading the crude consistence, half on foot,
 Half flying; behooves him now both oar and sail.
 As when a gryphon^o through the wilderness
 With winged course o'er hill or moory dale
 Pursues the Arimaspians, who by stealth
 Had from his wakeful custody purloined
 The guarded gold, so eagerly the Fiend

919 **frith** firth, estuary 921-22 This parenthesis is a Virgilian formula; repeated at vi, 310—11; x, 306. 922 **Bellona** goddess of war 927 **vans** wings 933 **pennons** pinions 934 **fathom** The original text has *fadom*. 939 **Syrtis** the Greek name for each of two great ship-swallowing gulfs on the north coast of Africa; generically quicksands (cf. Acts xxvii, 17—where the name occurs in the Greek). 939-40 cf. 912 943 **gryphon** The griffin was a fabulous eagle-headed winged lion, with a penchant for hoarding gold. According to Herodotus: "The story runs, that the one-eyed Arimaspi purloin it from the griffins," in the region of the Urals.

O'er bog or steep, through strait, rough, dense, or rare,
 With head, hands, wings, or feet, pursues his way,
 And swims, or sinks, or wades, or creeps, or flies.
 At length a universal hubbub wild
 Of stunning sounds, and voices all confused,
 Borne through the hollow dark, assaults his ear
 With loudest vehemence; thither he plies,
 Undaunted, to meet there whatever Power
 Or Spirit of the nethermost abyss
 Might in that noise reside, of whom to ask
 Which way the nearest coast of darkness lies
 Bordering on light; when straight behold the throne
 Of Chaos, and his dark pavilion spread
 Wide on the wasteful deep; with him enthroned
 Sat sable-vested Night, eldest of things,
 The consort of his reign, and by them stood
 Orcus and Ades,^o and the dreaded name
 Of Demogorgon,^o Rumour next, and Chance,
 And Tumult, and Confusion, all embroiled,
 And Discord with a thousand various mouths.

To whom Satan, turning boldly, thus: ‘Ye Powers
 And Spirits of this nethermost abyss,^o
 Chaos and ancient Night, I come no spy
 With purpose to explore or to disturb
 The secrets of your realm, but, by constraint
 Wandering this darksome desert, as my way
 Lies through your spacious empire up to light,
 Alone and without guide, half lost, I seek
 What readiest path leads where your gloomy bounds
 Confine with^o Heaven; or, if some other place,
 From your dominion won, the Ethereal King
 Possesses lately, thither to arrive
 I travel this profound. Direct my course:

964 **Orcus and Ades** Roman and Greek forms of Hades, god of the underworld 965
Demogorgon “ancestor of all the gods . . . also called Chaos by the ancients . . .
 begot the Earth among many other children,” observed Milton in his Cambridge
 First Prolusion. The idea of the “dreaded” or forbidden name comes from Lactantius
 on Statius. Demogorgon figures in Shelley’s *Prometheus Unbound*. 969 cf. 956 977
Confine with border on

Directed, no mean recompense it brings
 To your behoof, if I that region lost,
 All usurpation thence expelled, reduce
 To her original darkness and your sway
 (Which is my present journey), and once more
 Erect the standard there of ancient Night;^o
 Yours be the advantage all, mine the revenge!’
 Thus Satan; and him thus the Anarch old,
 With faltering speech and visage incomposed,^o
 Answered: ‘I know thee, stranger, who thou art—
 That mighty leading Angel, who of late
 Made head against Heaven’s King, though overthrown.
 I saw and heard, for such a numerous host
 Fled not in silence through the frightened deep,
 With ruin upon ruin, rout on rout,
 Confusion worse confounded, and Heaven-gates^o
 Poured out by millions her victorious bands,
 Pursuing. I upon my frontiers here
 Keep residence; if all I can will serve
 That little which is left so to defend,
 Encroached on still through our intestine broils
 Weakening the sceptre of old Night: first, Hell,
 Your dungeon, stretching far and wide beneath;
 Now lately Heaven^o and Earth, another world
 Hung o’er my realm, linked in a golden chain
 To that side Heaven^o from whence your legions fell;
 If that way be your walk, you have not far—
 So much the nearer danger. Go, and speed;
 Havoc, and spoil, and ruin, are my gain.’

He ceased, and Satan stayed not to reply,
 But, glad that now his sea should find a shore,
 With fresh alacrity and force renewed
 Springs upward, like a pyramid of fire,
 Into the wild expanse, and through the shock
 Of fighting elements on all sides round
 Environed, wins his way, harder beset

986 **ancient Night** cf. 970; also 1002 and i, 543. 989 **incomposed** not composed
 996 **Heaven-gates** cf. i, 326 1004, 1006 The poet has been criticized for using
 “Heaven” in one sentence in two different senses.

And more endangered than when Argo^o passed
 Through Bosporus betwixt the justling rocks,
 Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
 Charybdis, and by the other whirlpool^o steered.
 So he with difficulty and labour hard
 Moved on, with difficulty and labour he;
 But, he once passed, soon after, when Man fell,
 Strange alteration! Sin and Death amain,^o
 Following his track (such was the will of Heaven),
 Paved after him a broad and beaten way
 Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
 Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length,
 From Hell continued, reaching the utmost orb
 Of this frail world, by which the Spirits perverse
 With easy intercourse pass to and fro
 To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
 God and good Angels guard by special grace.

But now at last the sacred influence
 Of light appears, and from the walls of Heaven
 Shoots far into the bosom of dim Night
 A glimmering dawn. Here Nature first begins
 Her farthest verge, and Chaos to retire,
 As from her outmost works, a broken foe,
 With tumult less and with less hostile din,
 That Satan with less toil, and now with ease
 Wafts on the calmer wave by dubious light,
 And, like a weather-beaten vessel, holds
 Gladly the port, though shrouds^o and tackle torn,
 Or in the emptier waste, resembling air,
 Weighs his spread wings, at leisure to behold
 Far off the empyreal Heaven, extended wide
 In circuit, undetermined square or round,^o
 With opal towers and battlements adorned
 Of living sapphire,^o once his native seat,

1017 ff. **Argo** The ship that carried Jason in quest of the Golden Fleece had to maneuver through “the justling rocks,” the Sympleglades, at the entrance to the Black Sea from the Sea of Marmora. 1020 **the other whirlpool** Scylla (see note on 660-61) 1024 **amain** cf. 165 1044 **shrouds** the ropes of a ship’s rigging 1048 The “circuit” was so wide that its shape could not be determined by the eye. 1050 **sapphire** on the authority of Revelation xxi, 19

And, fast by, hanging in a golden chain,^o
 This pendent World,^o in bigness as a star
 Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
 Thither, full fraught with mischievous revenge
 Accursed, and in a cursed hour, he hies.

1051 **hanging in a golden chain** cf. 1005 1052 **This pendent World** not “the pendulous round Earth” (iv, 1000) but the universe, the cosmos inside its shell unpenetrated as yet by Satan. He alights on “the utmost orb,” 1029, the outside shell of the tenth sphere, the Primum Mobile “that first moved” (iii, 483) the concentric other nine which, according to the Ptolemaic astronomy, spin around the fixed earth—the Crystalline Sphere, the Sphere of the Fixed Stars, and the spheres of “the planets seven” (iii, 481): Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and the Moon.

BOOK III

THE ARGUMENT

God, sitting on his throne, sees Satan flying towards this World, then newly created; shows him to the Son, who sat at his right hand; foretells the success of Satan in perverting mankind; clears his own justice and wisdom from all imputation, having created Man free and able enough to have withstood his Tempter; yet declares his purpose of grace towards him, in regard he fell not of his own malice, as did Satan, but by him seduced. The Son of God renders praises to his Father for the manifestation of his gracious purpose towards Man; but God again declares that grace cannot be extended towards Man without the satisfaction of Divine Justice; Man hath offended the majesty of God by aspiring to Godhead, and therefore, with all his progeny, devoted to death, must die, unless someone can be found sufficient to answer for his offence, and undergo his punishment. The Son of God freely offers himself a ransom for Man; the Father accepts him, ordains his incarnation, pronounces his exaltation above all names in Heaven and Earth, commands all the Angels to adore him; they obey, and, hymning to their harps in full choir, celebrate the Father and the Son. Meanwhile, Satan alights upon the bare convex of this World's outermost orb; where wandering he first finds a place since called the Limbo of Vanity; what persons and things fly up thither; thence comes to the gate of Heaven, described ascending by stairs, and the waters above the firmament that flow about it. His passage thence to the orb of the Sun; he finds there Uriel, the regent of that orb, but first changes himself into the shape of a meaner Angel, and, pretending a zealous desire to behold the new Creation, and Man whom God had placed here, inquires of him the place of his habitation, and is directed; alights first on Mount Niphates.

HAIL, holy Light, offspring of Heaven first-born!°
Or of the Eternal coeternal beam
May I express thee unblamed? since God is light,°
And never but in unapproachèd light
Dwelt from eternity, dwelt then in thee,
Bright effluence of bright essence increate!
Or hear'st thou rather pure ethereal stream,
Whose fountain who shall tell? before the Sun,
Before the Heavens, thou wert,° and at the voice
Of God, as with a mantle, didst invest
The rising world of waters dark and deep,
Won from the void and formless Infinite.
Thee I revisit now with bolder wing,
Escaped the Stygian Pool, though long detained
In that obscure sojourn, while in my flight,
Through utter and through middle darkness° borne,
With other notes than to the Orphean lyre°
I sung of Chaos and eternal Night,
Taught by the Heavenly Muse° to venture down
The dark descent, and up to reascend,
Though hard and rare—thee I revisit safe,°
And feel thy sovran vital lamp, but thou
Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn,
So thick a drop serene hath quenched their orbs,
Or dim suffusion veiled.° Yet not the more
Cease I to wander where the Muses haunt
Clear spring, or shady grove, or sunny hill,
Smit with the love of sacred song; but chief
Thee, Sion, and the flowery brooks beneath,°
That wash thy hallowed feet, and warbling flow,
Nightly I visit, nor sometimes forget

1 cf. i, 510 3 **God is light** 1 John i, 5 8-9 cf. Genesis i, 3, 16 16 Hell and Chaos are meant, respectively. 17 Again Milton stresses that his is not the pagan inspiration, such as that of the legendary Orpheus, on whom see "Lycidas," 58. 19 **Heavenly Muse** as mentioned in the first invocation, i, 6. "The precincts of light" (88) are the occasion for a fresh and poignantly personal ceremonious beginning. 21 cf. 13 25-26 Milton did not know—nor do modern authorities agree on—the nature and cause of the poet's blindness. 30 cf. i, 11

Those other two equalled with me in fate,
 So were I equalled with them in renown,
 Blind Thamyris^o and blind Maeonides,^o
 And Tiresias^o and Phineus,^o prophets old,
 Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
 Harmonious numbers,^o as the wakeful bird^o
 Sings darkling,^o and, in shadiest covert hid,
 Tunes her nocturnal note. Thus with the year^o
 Seasons return, but not to me returns
 Day, or the sweet approach of even or morn,
 Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
 Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine,
 But cloud instead and ever-during dark
 Surrounds me, from the cheerful ways of men
 Cut off, and, for the book of knowledge fair,
 Presented with a universal blank
 Of Nature's works, to me expunged and rased,
 And wisdom at one entrance quite shut out.
 So much the rather thou, Celestial Light,^o
 Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
 Irradiate; there plant eyes; all mist from thence
 Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
 Of things invisible to mortal sight.

Now had the Almighty Father from above,
 From the pure empyrean where he sits
 High throned above all height, bent down his eye,
 His own works and their works at once to view;
 About him all the Sanctities of Heaven
 Stood thick as stars, and from his sight received
 Beatitude past utterance; on his right
 The radiant image of his glory sat,
 His only Son; on Earth he first beheld
 Our two first parents, yet the only two

35 **Thamyris** bard who, for his audacity in challenging the Muses to a test of skill, was deprived by them of his sight **Maeonides** Homer 36 **Tiresias** the blind soothsayer renowned from Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* to Eliot's *The Wasteland* **Phineus** like Thamyris was from Thrace. 38 **numbers** verse **the wakeful bird** the nightingale 39 **darkling** in the dark 40—50 cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 67-109 51 **Celestial Light** cf. i, 245

Of mankind, in the happy garden placed,
 Reaping immortal fruits of joy and love,
 Uninterrupted joy, unrivalled love,
 In blissful solitude; he then surveyed
 Hell and the gulf between, and Satan there
 Coasting the wall of Heaven on this side Night,
 In the dun air sublime, and ready now
 To stoop, with wearied wings and willing feet,
 On the bare outside of this World, that seemed
 Firm land^o imbosomed without firmament,
 Uncertain which, in ocean or in air.
 Him God beholding from his prospect high,

Wherein past, present, future, he beholds,
 Thus to his only Son foreseeing spake:
 'Only-begotten Son, seest thou what rage
 Transports our Adversary? whom no bounds
 Prescribed, no bars of Hell, nor all the chains
 Heaped on him there, nor yet the main abyss
 Wide interrupt,^o can hold, so bent he seems
 On desperate revenge^o that shall redound
 Upon his own rebellious head. And now,
 Through all restraint broke loose, he wings his way
 Not far off Heaven, in the precincts of light,
 Directly towards the new-created World,
 And Man there placed, with purpose to assay
 If him by force he can destroy, or worse,
 By some false guile pervert—and shall pervert;^o
 For Man will hearken to his glozing lies,
 And easily transgress the sole command,
 Sole pledge of his obedience:^o so will fall
 He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault?
 Whose but his own? Ingrate, he had of me

75 **Firm land** cf. ii, 589 (*terra firma*) 84 **Wide interrupt** referring to the wide division between Hell and Heaven 85 **desperate revenge** a phrase from ii, 107 92 **and shall pervert** God foreknows the future, but this foreknowledge is not to be interpreted as an interference with the creatures' free will; God's foreknowledge is of the wrong choice that Man will make. Cf. 117-18. 94-95 The forbidden tree had to be in the garden or Man would have had nothing important on which to exercise his free will. If he had had no opportunity to disobey he would have been in effect a puppet; cf. 103 ff.

All he could have; I made him just and right,
 Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
 Such I created all the Ethereal Powers
 And Spirits, both them who stood and them who failed;
 Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
 Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
 Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love,
 Where only what they needs must do appeared,
 Not what they would? What praise could they receive,
 What pleasure I, from such obedience paid,
 When Will and Reason (Reason also is Choice),^o
 Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
 Made passive both, had served Necessity,
 Not me? They, therefore, as to right belonged,
 So were created, nor can justly accuse
 Their Maker, or their making, or their fate,
 As if Predestination overruled
 Their will, disposed by absolute decree
 Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed
 Their own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,
 Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
 Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
 So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, authors to themselves in all,
 Both what they judge and what they choose; for so
 I formed them free, and free they must remain
 Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
 Their nature, and revoke the high decree
 Unchangeable, eternal, which ordained
 Their freedom; they themselves ordained their fall.
 The first sort by their own suggestion fell,

Self-tempted, self-depraved; Man falls, deceived
By the other first: Man, therefore, shall find grace,
The other, none; in mercy and justice both,
Through Heaven and Earth, so shall my glory excel,
But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine.'

108 "Many there be that complain of Divine Providence for suffering Adam to transgress. Foolish tongues! When God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose; for *reason* is but choosing." *Areopagitica*.

Thus while God spake, ambrosial fragrance filled
All Heaven, and in the blessed Spirits elect
Sense of new joy ineffable diffused.
Beyond compare the Son of God was seen
Most glorious; in him all his Father shone
Substantially expressed; and in his face
Divine compassion visibly appeared,
Love without end, and without measure grace;
Which uttering, thus he to his Father spake:
'O Father, gracious was that word^o which closed
Thy sovran sentence, that Man should find grace;
For which both Heaven and Earth shall high extol
Thy praises, with the innumerable sound
Of hymns and sacred songs, wherewith thy throne
Encompassed shall resound thee ever blest.
For should Man finally be lost, should man,
Thy creature late so loved, thy youngest son,
Fall circumvented thus by fraud, though joined
With his own folly? That be from thee far,
That far be from thee, Father, who art judge
Of all things made, and judgest only right.
Or shall the Adversary thus obtain
His end, and frustrate thine? shall he fulfil
His malice, and thy goodness bring to naught,
Or proud return, though to his heavier doom,
Yet with revenge accomplished, and to Hell
Draw after him the whole race of mankind,
By him corrupted? Or wilt thou thyself
Abolish thy creation, and unmake,
For him, what for thy glory thou hast made?
So should thy goodness and thy greatness both
Be questioned and blasphemed without defence.'

To whom the great Creator^o thus replied:
'O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight,
Son of my bosom, Son who art alone
My word, my wisdom, and effectual might,
All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all

144 **gracious . . . word** a bit of a pun in so far as it echoes 131, a subject repeated at 145 and 227 167 **the great Creator** a phrase applied both to the Father and to the Son: ii, 385; iii, 673; vii. 567 ("their great Creator," iv, 684)

As my eternal purpose hath decreed.
Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will,
Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
Freely vouchsafed. Once more I will renew
His lapsed powers, though forfeit, and enthralled
By sin to foul exorbitant desires:
Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
On even ground against his mortal foe,
By me upheld, that he may know how frail
His fallen condition is, and to me owe
All his deliverance, and to none but me.

Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
 Elect above the rest; so is my will:
 The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warned
 Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
 The incensed Deity, while offered grace
 Invites; for I will clear their senses dark
 What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
 To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
 Though but endeavoured with sincere intent,
 Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut.
 And I will place within them as a guide
 My umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear
 Light after light well used they shall attain,
 And to the end persisting safe arrive.
 This my long sufferance and my day of grace
 They who neglect and scorn shall never taste;
 But hard be hardened, blind be blinded more,
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall,
 And none but such from mercy I exclude.
 But yet all is not done. Man disobeying,
 Disloyal, breaks his fealty, and sins
 Against the high supremacy^o of Heaven.
 Affecting Godhead, and, so losing all,
 To expiate his treason hath naught left,
 But, to destruction sacred and devote,^o

205 **high supremacy** cf. i, 132 208 **sacred and devote** synonymous Latin expressions for doomed

He with his whole posterity must die—
 Die he or Justice must, unless for him^o
 Some other, able, and as willing, pay
 The rigid satisfaction, death for death.
 Say, Heavenly Powers, where shall we find such love?
 Which of ye will be mortal, to redeem
 Man's mortal crime, and just the unjust to save?

210 ff. In theology the Ransom Theory (cf. xii, 424) was succeeded by the less crude Satisfaction Theory, set forth by Anselm in *Cur Deus Homo?*: "The problem is. how can God forgive man's sin? To clear our thoughts let us first consider what sin is, and what satisfaction for sin is. . . . *To sin* is to fail to render to God His due. What is due to God? Righteousness, or rectitude of will. He who fails to render this honor to God, robs God of that which belongs to Him, and dishonors God. This is *sin*. . . . And what is satisfaction? It is not enough simply to restore what has been taken away; but, in consideration of the insult offered, more than what was taken away must be rendered back.

"Let us consider whether God could properly remit sin by mercy alone without satisfaction. So to remit sin would be simply to abstain from punishing it. And since the only possible way of correcting sin for which no satisfaction has been made is to punish it, not to punish it, is to remit it uncorrected. But God cannot properly leave anything uncorrected in His Kingdom. Moreover, so to remit sin unpunished would be treating the sinful and the sinless alike, which would be incongruous to God's nature. And incongruity is injustice.

"It is necessary, therefore, that either the honor taken away should be repaid, or punishment should be inflicted. Otherwise one of two things follows—either God is not just to Himself, or He is powerless to do what He ought to do. A blasphemous supposition.

"The satisfaction ought to be in proportion to the sin.

"Satisfaction cannot be made unless there be some One able to pay to God for man's sin something greater than all that is beside God. . . . Now nothing is greater than all that is not God, except God Himself. None therefore can make this

satisfaction except God. And none ought to make it except man. . . . If, then, it be necessary that the kingdom of heaven be completed by man's admission, and if man cannot be admitted unless the aforesaid satisfaction for sin be first made, and if God only *can*, and man only *ought* to make this satisfaction, then necessarily One must make it who is both God and man." Cf. iii, 238 and 282 ff.

Dwells in all Heaven charity° so dear?'

He asked, but all the Heavenly choir stood mute,°
And silence was in Heaven: on Man's behalf
Patron or intercessor none appeared,
Much less that durst upon his own head draw
The deadly forfeiture and ransom set.
And now without redemption all mankind
Must have been lost, adjudged to Death and Hell
By doom severe, had not the Son of God,
In whom the fulness dwells of love divine,
His dearest mediation thus renewed:

'Father, thy word is passed, Man shall find grace;
And shall grace not find means, that finds her way,
The speediest of thy winged messengers,
To visit all thy creatures, and to all
Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought?
Happy for Man, so coming! He her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost;
Atonement for himself, or offering meet,
Indebted and undone, hath none to bring.
Behold me, then: me for him, life for life,
I offer; on me let thine anger fall;
Account me Man: I for his sake will leave
Thy bosom, and this glory next to thee
Freely put off, and for him lastly die
Well pleased;° on me let Death wreak all his rage.
Under his gloomy power I shall not long
Lie vanquished. Thou hast given me to possess
Life in myself forever; by thee I live;
Though now to Death I yield, and am his due,
All that of me can die, yet, that debt paid,
Thou wilt not leave me in the loathsome grave
His prey, nor suffer my unspotted soul
Forever with corruption there to dwell,
But I shall rise victorious, and subdue
My vanquisher, spoiled of his vaunted spoil.

216 **charity** love, as in the Anglican Version of St. Paul's epistles 217 cf. ii, 417 ff.

241 **Well pleased** a characteristic phrase; cf. x, 71 and *Paradise Regained*, i, 286
(quoting the recurring Gospel sentence, Matt. iii, 17. etc.). Cf. 257 and 276
("complacence" means pleasure).

Death his death's wound shall then receive, and stoop
Inglorious, of his mortal sting° disarmed;
I through the ample air in triumph high
Shall lead Hell captive maugre Hell, and show
The powers of darkness bound. Thou, at the sight
Pleased, out of Heaven shalt look down and smile,
While, by thee raised, I ruin all my foes,
Death last, and with his carcase glut the grave;
Then, with the multitude of my redeemed,
Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,
Father, to see thy face, wherein no cloud
Of anger shall remain, but peace assured
And reconciliation: wrath shall be no more
Thenceforth, but in thy presence joy entire.'

His words here ended; but his meek aspect
 Silent yet spake, and breathed immortal love
 To mortal men, above which only shone
 Filial obedience; as a sacrifice
 Glad to be offered, he attends the will
 Of his great Father. Admiration° seized
 All Heaven what this might mean and whither tend,
 Wondering, but soon the Almighty thus replied:
 'O thou in Heaven and Earth the only peace
 Found out for mankind under wrath, O thou
 My sole complacence! well thou know'st how dear
 To me are all my works, nor Man the least,
 Though last created, that for him I spare
 Thee from my bosom and right hand, to save,
 By losing thee a while, the whole race lost.
 Thou, therefore, whom thou only canst redeem,
 Their nature also to thy nature join,
 And be thyself Man among men on Earth,
 Made flesh, when time shall be, of virgin seed,
 By wondrous birth; be thou in Adam's room
 The head of all mankind, though Adam's son.
 As in him perish all men, so in thee,

253 **mortal sting** as in ii, 653. Cf. 1 Corinthians, xv, 55: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Compare with 252 the last line of John Donne's Holy Sonnet 10: "And Death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die." 271
Admiration wonder, as with the verb at ii, 677, 678

As from a second root, shall be restored
 As many as are restored; without thee, none.
 His crime makes guilty all his sons; thy merit,
 Imputed,° shall absolve them who renounce
 Their own both righteous and unrighteous deeds,
 And live in thee transplanted, and from thee
 Receive new life. So Man, as is most just,
 Shall satisfy for Man, be judged and die,
 And dying rise, and, rising, with him raise
 His brethren, ransomed with his own dear life.
 So Heavenly love shall outdo hellish hate,
 Giving to death, and dying to redeem,
 So dearly to redeem what hellish hate
 So easily destroyed, and still destroys
 In those who, when they may, accept not grace.
 Nor shalt thou, by descending to assume
 Man's nature, lessen or degrade thine own.
 Because thou hast, though throned in highest bliss
 Equal to God, and equally enjoying
 Godlike fruition, quitted all to save
 A world from utter loss, and hast been found
 By merit more than birthright Son of God,
 Found worthiest to be so by being good,
 Far more than great or high; because in thee
 Love hath abounded more than glory abounds,
 Therefore thy humiliation shall exalt
 With thee thy manhood also to this throne:
 Here shalt thou sit incarnate, here shalt reign
 Both God and Man, Son both of God and Man,
 Anointed universal King. All power
 I give thee; reign forever, and assume
 Thy merits; under thee, as Head Supreme,
 Thrones, Principedoms, Powers, Dominions, I reduce:
 All knees to thee shall bow of them that bide

In Heaven, or Earth, or, under Earth, in Hell.
When thou, attended gloriously from Heaven,
Shalt in the sky appear, and from thee send

291 **Imputed** “As therefore our sins are imputed to Christ, so the merits or righteousness of Christ are imputed to us through faith.” Milton’s *De Doctrina Christiana*, I, 22. Cf. below, xii, 407-10.

The summoning Archangels to proclaim
Thy dread tribunal, forthwith from all winds
The living, and forthwith the cited dead
Of all past ages, to the general doom
Shall hasten; such a peal shall rouse their sleep.
Then, all thy Saints assembled, thou shalt judge
Bad men and Angels; they arraigned shall sink
Beneath thy sentence; Hell, her numbers full,
Thenceforth shall be forever shut.^o Meanwhile
The World shall burn, and from her ashes spring
New Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell,
And, after all their tribulations long,
See golden days, fruitful of golden deeds,
With Joy and Love triumphing, and fair Truth.
Then thou thy regal sceptre shalt lay by;
For regal sceptre then no more shall need;
God shall be all in all. But all ye Gods,^o
Adore him who, to compass all this, dies;
Adore the Son, and honour him as me.’

No sooner had the Almighty ceased, but all
The multitude of Angels, with a shout
Loud as from numbers without number, sweet
As from blest voices, uttering joy, Heaven rung
With jubilee, and loud hosannas filled
The eternal regions. Lowly reverent
Towards either throne they bow, and to the ground
With solemn adoration down they cast
Their crowns, inwove with amaranth^o and gold—
Immortal amaranth, a flower which once
In Paradise, fast by the Tree of Life,
Began to bloom, but soon for Man’s offence
To Heaven removed, where first it grew, there grows,
And flowers aloft, shading the Fount of Life,
And where the River of Bliss through midst of Heaven
Rolls o’er Elysian flowers her amber stream;

333 **forever shut** cf. ii, 776 341 **Gods** a usage already common in the poem, i, 116, 138, 240, 629; ii, 352, 391. “The name of God is not infrequently ascribed, by the will and concession of God the Father, even to angels and men.” *De Doctrina Christiana*, I, 6 (Columbia Milton, XIV, 245). 352-53 **amaranth** means *immortal* and reappears as an adjective xi, 78.

With these, that never fade, the Spirits elect^o
Bind their resplendent locks, inwreathed with beams,
Now in loose garlands thick thrown off, the bright
Pavement, that like a sea of jasper shone,
Impurpled with celestial roses smiled.
Then, crowned again, their golden harps they took,
Harps ever tuned, that glittering by their side
Like quivers hung, and with preamble sweet
Of charming symphony they introduce
Their sacred song,^o and waken raptures high:
No voice exempt, no voice but well could join
Melodious part; such concord^o is in Heaven.

Thee, Father, first they sung, Omnipotent,
 Immutable, Immortal, Infinite,^o
 Eternal King; thee, Author of all being,
 Fountain of Light, thyself invisible
 Amidst the glorious brightness where thou sitt'st
 Throned inaccessible, but when thou shad'st
 The full blaze of thy beams, and through a cloud
 Drawn round about thee like a radiant shrine,
 Dark with excessive bright thy skirts appear,
 Yet dazzle Heaven, that brightest Seraphim
 Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes.
 Thee next they sang, of all creation first,
 Begotten Son, Divine Similitude,
 In whose conspicuous countenance, without cloud
 Made visible, the Almighty Father shines,
 Whom else no creature can behold: on thee
 Impressed the effulgence of his glory abides;
 Transfused on thee his ample Spirit rests.
 He Heaven of Heavens, and all the Powers therein,
 By thee created; and by thee threw down
 The aspiring Dominations; thou that day
 Thy Father's dreadful thunder didst not spare,
 Nor stop thy flaming chariot-wheels, that shook
 Heaven's everlasting frame, while o'er the necks

360 **Spirits elect** The same words ended line 136. 369 **sacred song** cf. 29, 148 371
concord a pun, of course. "Men only disagree" (ii, 497). 373 The same line occurs
 in Milton's popular predecessor, Joshua Sylvester, *Du Bartas, His Divine Weeks*
 (1608).

Thou drov'st of warring Angels disarrayed.
 Back from pursuit, thy Powers with loud acclaim^o
 Thee only extolled, Son of thy Father's might,
 To execute fierce vengeance on his foes.
 Not so on Man: him, through their malice fallen,
 Father of mercy and grace, thou didst not doom
 So strictly, but much more to pity incline.
 No sooner did thy dear and only Son
 Perceive thee purposed not to doom frail Man
 So strictly, but much more to pity inclined,
 He, to appease thy wrath, and end the strife
 Of mercy and justice in thy face discerned,
 Regardless of the bliss wherein he sat
 Second to thee, offered himself to die
 For Man's offence.^o O unexampled love,
 Love nowhere to be found less than Divine!
 Hail, Son of God, Saviour of men; Thy name
 Shall be the copious matter of my song
 Henceforth, and never shall my harp thy praise
 Forget, nor from thy Father's praise disjoin!

Thus they in Heaven, above the starry sphere,
 Their happy hours in joy and hymning spent.
 Meanwhile, upon the firm opacous^o globe
 Of this round World, whose first convex divides
 The luminous inferior orbs,^o enclosed
 From Chaos and the inroad of Darkness old,
 Satan alighted walks. A globe far off
 It seemed, now seems a boundless continent,
 Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of Night
 Starless exposed, and ever-threatening storms
 Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky,
 Save on that side which from the wall of Heaven,

Though distant far, some small reflection gains
 Of glimmering air less vexed with tempest loud;
 Here walked the Fiend at large in spacious field.
 As when a vulture, on Imaus^o bred,

397 **loud acclaim** parallel with ii, 520 410 Note the repetitions for emphasis in this area—402, 405; “For Man’s offence” echoes 355. 418 **opacous** dark 419-20 cf. ii, 1052, note 431 **Imaus** the Himalayas (from Sanskrit Himava, “snowy,” leading to “snowy ridge,” 432)

Whose snowy ridge the roving Tartar^o bounds,
 Dislodging from a region scarce of prey
 To gorge the flesh of lambs or yeanling kids
 On hills where flocks are fed, flies toward the springs
 Of Ganges or Hydaspes, Indian streams,
 But in his way lights on the barren plains
 Of Sericana,^o where Chineses^o drive
 With sails and wind their cany waggons light,
 So on this windy sea of land the Fiend
 Walked up and down alone, bent on his prey—
 Alone, for other creature in this place,
 Living or lifeless, to be found was none;
 None yet, but store hereafter from the Earth
 Up hither like aerial vapours flew
 Of all things transitory and vain, when sin
 With vanity had filled the works of men:
 Both all things vain, and all who in vain things
 Built their fond^o hopes of glory or lasting fame,
 Or happiness in this or the other life;
 All who have their reward on earth, the fruits
 Of painful superstition and blind zeal,
 Naught seeking but the praise of men, here find
 Fit retribution, empty as their deeds;
 All the unaccomplished works of Nature’s hand,
 Abortive, monstrous, or unkindly mixed,
 Dissolved on Earth, fleet hither, and in vain,
 Till final dissolution, wander here,
 Not in the neighbouring Moon, as some^o have dreamed:

432 Tartar These invaders from east central Asia overran parts of Asia and Europe under Mongol leadership in the thirteenth century, and continued to trouble nearly all of Russia and Siberia, as x, 431 indicates, “gorging” where they might. 437-38 **the barren plains/ Of Sericana** the Gobi desert **Chineses** a plural in regular use in the seventeenth century. The story of the Chinese wind-wagons was vouched for by several geographers, though one of them, the Spanish Jesuit Mendoza, bore a name that encouraged suspicion of mendacity. 449 **fond** The modern meaning combines with the old of “foolish.” 459 **some** Ariosto placed his “paradise of fools” in the moon: with mock seriousness Milton relocates it, in this the second—and last—large allegory of his poem (Sin and Death being the first).

Those argent fields more likely habitants,^o
 Translated Saints, or middle Spirits hold,
 Betwixt the angelical and human kind:
 Hither, of ill-joined sons and daughters born,
 First from the ancient world those Giants came,
 With many a vain exploit, though then renowned:
 The builders next of Babel on the plain
 Of Sennaar,^o and still with vain design
 New Babels, had they wherewithal, would build:
 Others came single; he who, to be deemed
 A god, leaped fondly into Aetna flames,
 Empedocles;^o and he who, to enjoy

Plato's Elysium, leaped into the sea,
 Cleombrotus;^o and many more, too long,
 Embryos and idiots, eremites and friars,
 White, black, and grey,^o with all their trumpery.
 Here pilgrims roam, that strayed so far to seek
 In Golgotha him dead who lives in Heaven;^o
 And they who, to be sure of Paradise,
 Dying put on the weeds of Dominic,
 Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised.
 They pass the planets seven, and pass the fixed,^o
 And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
 The trepidation talked,^o and that first moved;^o

460 ff. The moon is reserved for such as Enoch and Elijah and such "middle spirits" as the products of miscegenation between angels and mortals or the giants of Genesis vi, 4. 467 **Sennaar** Shinar (Gen. x, 10; xi, 2), but Milton avoids the "sh" sound, as at i, 413. 471 **Empedocles** pre-Socratic philosopher who professed miraculous and prophetic powers and hurled himself into the crater (cf. i, 233) in order that he might be thought a god from his sudden and total disappearance. fondly (470) may refer in part to the tradition that the volcano threw up one of his sandals and so betrayed him. 473 **Cleombrotus** young Epirot who, according to Lactantius, was so eager to taste the immortality of the soul after reading the *Phaedo* that he drowned himself. 475 **White, black, and grey** Carmelites, Dominicans, and Franciscans 476-77 Protestant that he was, Milton waxes sarcastic on those who went on pilgrimage to Mount Calvary; the futility of their quest is summed up in Golgotha, "the place of the skull." 481 **fixed** i.e., stars 482-83 **whose balance weighs/ The trepidation talked** (of) Libra the Scales weighs or calculates the alleged libration of the eighth (Starry) sphere, this trepidation having been added to the Ptolemaic system in the tenth century "to account for certain phenomena . . . really due to the rotation of the earth's axis" (*Oxford English Dictionary*). Another double reference to the constellation Libra occurs at iv, 997 ff. **that first moved** "That high first-moving sphere" ("Death of a Fair Infant." 39), the Primum Mobile

And now Saint Peter at Heaven's wicket seems
 To wait them with his keys, and now at foot
 Of Heaven's ascent they lift their feet, when, lo!
 A violent cross-wind from either coast
 Blows them transverse,^o ten thousand leagues awry,
 Into the devious air: then might ye see
 Cowls, hoods, and habits, with their wearers, tossed
 And fluttered into rags; then relics, beads,
 Indulgences, dispenses, pardons, bulls,
 The sport of winds: all these, upwhirled aloft,
 Fly o'er the backside of the World far off
 Into a Limbo^o large and broad, since called
 The Paradise of Fools, to few unknown
 Long after, now unpeopled and untrod.
 All this dark globe the Fiend found as he passed,
 And long he wandered, till at last a gleam
 Of dawning light turned thitherward in haste
 His travelled^o steps. Far distant he descries,
 Ascending by degrees magnificent
 Up to the wall of Heaven,^o a structure high,
 At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared
 The work as of a kingly palace-gate,
 With frontispiece of diamond and gold
 Embellished; thick with sparkling orient gems
 The portal shone, inimitable on Earth
 By model, or by shading pencil drawn.
 The stairs were such as whereon Jacob saw^o
 Angels ascending and descending, bands
 Of guardians bright, when he from Esau fled

To Padan-Aram,^o in the field of Luz,^o
Dreaming by night under the open sky,
And waking cried, *This is the gate of Heaven.*

488 **transverse** crosswise; cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 209. 495 **Limbo** literally, edge 501
travelled play on travailed, tired 503 **the wall of Heaven** cf. 71, 427 510 ff. Genesis
xxviii, 1-2, 11-17 513 **Padan-Aram** city to the east, in Mesopotamia **Luz** twelve
miles north of Jerusalem

Each stair mysteriously^o was meant, nor stood
There always, but drawn up to Heaven sometimes
Viewless, and underneath a bright sea flowed
Of jasper, or of liquid pearl, whereon
Who after came from Earth sailing arrived
Wafted by Angels, or flew o'er the lake
Rapt in a chariot drawn by fiery steeds.^o
The stairs were then let down, whether to dare
The Fiend by easy ascent,^o or aggravate
His sad exclusion from the doors of bliss;
Direct against which opened from beneath,
Just o'er the blissful seat^o of Paradise,
A passage down to the Earth, a passage wide,
Wider by far than that of after-times
Over Mount Sion, and, though that were large,
Over the Promised Land to God so dear,
By which, to visit oft those happy tribes,
On high behests his Angels to and fro
Passed frequent, and his eye with choice regard^o
From Paneas, the fount of Jordan's flood,
To Beërsaba, where the Holy Land
Borders on Egypt and the Arabian shore.
So wide the opening seemed, where bounds were set
To darkness, such as bound the ocean wave.
Satan from hence, now on the lower stair,
That scaled by steps of gold to Heaven-gate,
Looks down with wonder at the sudden view^o
Of all this World at once. As when a scout,
Through dark and desert ways with peril gone
All night, at last by break of cheerful dawn
Obtains the brow of some high-climbing hill,
Which to his eye discovers unaware
The goodly prospect of some foreign land
First seen, or some renowned metropolis
With glistening spires and pinnacles adorned,
Which now the rising sun gilds with his beams—
Such wonder seized, though after Heaven seen,

516 **mysteriously** allegorically 522 like Elijah 524 **easy ascent** cf. ii, 81 527 **blissful seat** cf. i, 5 534 **choice regard** The same phrase, so galling to Satan, ended line 653
of i. 542 **sudden view** cf. ii, 890

The Spirit malign, but much more envy seized,
At sight of all this World beheld so fair.
Round he surveys (and well might, where he stood
So high above the circling canopy
Of Night's extended shade) from eastern point
Of Libra to the fleecy star that bears
Andromeda far off Atlantic seas^o
Beyond the horizon; then from pole to pole
He views in breadth, and, without longer pause,
Down right into the World's first region throws
His flight precipitant, and winds with ease

Through the pure marble^o air his oblique way
 Amongst innumerable stars, that shone
 Stars distant, but nigh-hand seemed other worlds,
 Or other worlds they seemed, or happy isles,
 Like those Hesperian Gardens^o famed of old,
 Fortunate fields, and groves, and flowery vales,
 Thrice happy isles, but who dwelt happy there
 He stayed not to inquire: above them all
 The golden Sun, in splendour likest Heaven,
 Allured his eye. Thither his course he bends,
 Through the calm firmament—but up or down,
 By centre or eccentric,^o hard to tell,
 Or longitude—where the great luminary,
 Aloof^o the vulgar constellations thick.
 That from his lordly eye keep distance due,
 Dispenses light from far. They, as they move
 Their starry dance in numbers^o that compute
 Days, months, and years, towards his all-cheering lamp
 Turn swift their various motions, or are turned
 By his magnetic beam, that gently warms
 The Universe, and to each inward part
 With gentle penetration, though unseen,

558-59 Milton represents the constellation Andromeda as borne by the fleecy star Aries, the Ram, inasmuch as the former lies above the latter constellation in the sky, though somewhat to the west. 564 **marble** bright as marble, which in Greek means *shining* 568 **Hesperian Gardens** had been referred to in a “Comus” variant after line 4—a pagan paradise in the West, the isles (570) of the Blest. 575 **eccentric** away from the center 577 **Aloof** preposition, apart from 580 **numbers** measures

Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep,^o
 So wondrously was set his station bright.
 There lands the Fiend, a spot like which perhaps
 Astronomer in the Sun's lucent orb
 Through his glazed optic tube yet never saw.
 The place he found beyond expression bright,
 Compared with aught on Earth, metal^o or stone;
 Not all parts like, but all alike informed
 With radiant light, as glowing iron with fire.
 If metal, part seemed gold, part silver clear;
 If stone, carbuncle most or chrysolite,
 Ruby or topaz, to the twelve that shone
 In Aaron's breastplate,^o and a stone besides,
 Imagined rather oft than elsewhere seen,
 That stone, or like to that, which here below^o
 Philosophers in vain so long have sought,
 In vain, though by their powerful art they bind
 Volatile Hermes,^o and call up unbound
 In various shapes old Proteus^o from the sea,
 Drained through a limbec to his native form.
 What wonder then if fields and regions here
 Breathe forth elixir pure, and rivers run
 Potable gold, when, with one virtuous touch,
 The arch-chemic Sun, so far from us remote,
 Produces, with terrestrial humour mixed,
 Here in the dark so many precious things

583-86 The sexual aspect of the solar energy. Cf. 608-11 and Diodorus Siculus: “Truly it is very apparent that colors, odors, fruits, different savors, greatness of creatures, forms of things, and variety of kinds produced by the earth—are made and procreated by the heat of the Sun, which, warming the moisture of the earth, is the true and only cause of those productions.” 592 **metal** 1667 and 1674 read *Medal*.

598 See Exodus xxviii, 15 ff. for the description of the jeweled breastplate of the elder brother of Moses who became high priest. 600 ff. The proverbial quest of the alchemists or philosophers was the stone that would turn baser metals into gold. 603 **Volatile Hermes** mythological-alchemical wordplay. The messenger god was winged, but the other reference is to the tendency of quicksilver or mercury to evaporate. 604 **Proteus** the sea divinity who shepherded seals and who would “take all manner of shapes” when seized (*Od.* IV, 417 ff.): an apt metaphor for the transmuting elixir (607) of the alchemists.

Of colour glorious and effect so rare?
 Here matter new to gaze the Devil met
 Undazzled. Far and wide his eye commands,
 For sight no obstacle found here, nor shade,
 But all sunshine, as when his beams at noon
 Culminate from the equator, as they now
 Shot upward still direct, whence no way round
 Shadow from body opaque can fall, and the air,
 Nowhere so clear, sharpened his visual ray
 To objects distant far, whereby he soon
 Saw within ken a glorious Angel stand,
 The same whom John saw also in the Sun.^o
 His back was turned, but not his brightness hid:
 Of beaming sunny rays a golden tiar^o
 Circled his head, nor less his locks behind
 Illustrious^o on his shoulders fledge with wings
 Lay waving round; on some great charge employed
 He seemed, or fixed in cogitation deep.
 Glad was the Spirit impure, as now in hope
 To find who might direct his wandering flight
 To Paradise, the happy seat of Man,
 His journey's end, and our beginning woe.
 But first he casts to change his proper shape,
 Which else might work him danger or delay,
 And now a stripling Cherub he appears,
 Not of the prime, yet such as in his face
 Youth smiled celestial, and to every limb
 Suitable grace diffused; so well he feigned.
 Under a coronet his flowing hair
 In curls on either cheek played; wings he wore
 Of many a coloured plume sprinkled with gold,
 His habit^o fit for speed succinct,^o and held
 Before his decent^o steps a silver wand.
 He drew not nigh unheard; the Angel bright,
 Ere he drew nigh, his radiant visage turned,
 Admonished by his ear, and straight was known
 The Archangel Uriel,^o one of the seven

623 “And I saw an angel standing in the sun.” Revelations xix, 17 625 **tiar** tiara 627
Illustrious Latin *illustris*, gleaming 643 **habit** dress **succinct** girt up 644 **decent**
 graceful 648 **Uriel** “Light of God”

Who in God's presence, nearest to his throne,
 Stand ready at command, and are his eyes
 That run through all the Heavens, or down to the Earth^o
 Bear his swift errands over moist and dry,^o
 O'er sea and land; him Satan thus accosts:
 ‘Uriel! for thou of those seven Spirits that stand
 In sight of God's high throne, gloriously bright,
 The first art wont his great authentic will
 Interpreter through highest Heaven to bring,
 Where all his Sons thy embassy attend,

And here art likeliest by supreme decree
 Like honour to obtain, and as his eye
 To visit oft this new Creation round—
 Unspeakable desire to see and know
 All these his wonderous works, but chiefly Man,
 His chief delight and favour, him for whom
 All these his works so wondrous he ordained,
 Hath brought me from the choirs of Cherubim
 Alone thus wandering. Brightest Seraph, tell
 In which of all these shining orbs hath Man
 His fixed seat—or fixèd seat hath none,
 But all these shining orbs his choice to dwell—
 That I may find him, and with secret gaze
 Or open admiration him behold
 On whom the great Creator hath bestowed
 Worlds, and on whom hath all these graces poured,
 That both in him and all things, as is meet
 The Universal Maker we may praise;
 Who justly hath driven out his rebel foes
 To deepest Hell, and, to repair that loss,
 Created this new happy race of Men
 To serve him better: wise are all his ways!’
 So spake the false dissembler unperceived,
 For neither man nor angel can discern
 Hypocrisy, the only evil that walks
 Invisible, except to God alone,
 By his permissive will, through Heaven and Earth;
 And oft, though Wisdom wake, Suspicion sleeps
 At Wisdom’s gate, and to Simplicity
 Resigns her charge, while Goodness thinks no ill

651 **down to the Earth** cf. 528 652 **moist and dry** cf. ii, 898

Where no ill seems: which now for once beguiled
 Uriel, though Regent of the Sun, and held
 The sharpest-sighted Spirit of all in Heaven,
 Who to the fraudulent impostor foul,
 In his uprightness, answer thus returned:
 ‘Fair Angel, thy desire, which tends to know
 The works of God, thereby to glorify
 The great Work-master, leads to no excess
 That reaches blame, but rather merits praise
 The more it seems excess, that led thee hither
 From thy empyreal^o mansion thus alone,
 To witness with thine eyes what some perhaps,
 Contented with report, hear only in Heaven—
 For wonderful indeed are all his works,
 Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
 Had in remembrance always with delight;
 But what created mind can comprehend
 Their number, or the wisdom infinite
 That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
 I saw when, at his word, the formless mass,
 This World’s material mould, came to a heap;
 Confusion heard his voice, and wild Uproar^o
 Stood ruled, stood vast Infinitude confined,
 Till, at his second bidding,^o Darkness fled,
 Light shone, and order from disorder sprung.
 Swift to their several quarters hasted then
 The cumbrous elements, Earth, Flood, Air, Fire,
 And this ethereal quintessence^o of Heaven
 Flew upward, spirited with various forms,

That rolled orbicular, and turned to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move:
Each had his place appointed, each his course;

699 **empyrean** In the midst of the irony of this extremely inapposite word the reader may hear one that does fit: imperial. 710 **wild Uproar** Chaos becomes linked with Hell (Satan and Chaos are allies) by the previous appearance of this phrase, ii, 541. 712 **at his second bidding**, which was “Let there be light.” 716 **ethereal quintessence** Ether and quintessence are the same, in Aristotelian theory the highest and last or celestial essence over and above the four “cumbrous elements” (715); the constituent of the celestial bodies.

The rest in circuit walls this Universe.
Look downward on that globe, whose hither side
With light from hence, though but reflected, shines:
That place is Earth, the seat of Man; that light
His day, which else, as the other hemisphere,
Night would invade; but there the neighbouring Moon
(So call that opposite fair star) her aid
Timely interposes, and, her monthly round
Still ending, still renewing, through mid-heaven,
With borrowed light her countenance triform^o
Hence fills and empties to enlighten the Earth,
And in her pale dominion checks the night.
That spot to which I point is Paradise,
Adam’s abode, those lofty shades his bower.
Thy way thou canst not miss; me mine requires.’
Thus said, he turned, and Satan, bowing low,
As to superior Spirits is wont in Heaven,
Where honour due and reverence none neglects,
Took leave, and toward the coast of Earth beneath,
Down from the ecliptic, sped with hoped success,
Throws his steep flight in many an aery wheel,^o
Nor stayed, till on Niphates’^o top he lights.

730 **triform** three-phased (cf. 731)—and the triple goddess, Luna, Diana, Hecate. 740-41 The rhythm imitates the flight or descent. 742 **Niphates** “Snow mountain,” called “the Assyrian mount,” iv, 126 (cf. *ib.* 569), actually part of the Taurus range in Armenia.

BOOK IV

THE ARGUMENT

Satan, now in prospect of Eden, and nigh the place where he must now attempt the bold enterprise which he undertook alone against God and Man, falls into many doubts with himself, and many passions, fear, envy, and despair; but at length confirms himself in evil; journeys on to Paradise, whose outward prospect and situation is described; overleaps the bounds; sits, in the shape of a cormorant, on the Tree of Life, as highest in the Garden, to look about him. The Garden described; Satan's first sight of Adam and Eve; his wonder at their excellent form and happy state, but with resolution to work their fall; overhears their discourse; thence gathers that the Tree of Knowledge was forbidden them to eat of under penalty of death, and thereon intends to found his temptation by seducing them to transgress; then leaves them a while, to know further of their state by some other means. Meanwhile Uriel, descending on a sunbeam, warns Gabriel, who had in charge the gate of Paradise, that some evil Spirit had escaped the Deep, and passed at noon by his Sphere, in the shape of a good Angel, down to Paradise, discovered after by his furious gestures in the mount. Gabriel promises to find him ere morning. Night coming on, Adam and Eve discourse of going to their rest: their bower described; their evening worship. Gabriel, drawing forth his bands of night-watch to walk the round of Paradise, appoints two strong Angels to Adam's bower, lest the evil Spirit should be there doing some harm to Adam or Eve sleeping: there they find him at the ear of Eve, tempting her in a dream, and bring him, though unwilling, to Gabriel: by whom questioned, he scornfully answers; prepares resistance; but, hindered by a sign from Heaven, flies out of Paradise.

O FOR that warning voice, which he^o who saw
The Apocalypse heard cry in Heaven aloud,
Then when the dragon, put to second rout,
Came furious down to be revenged on men,
Woe to the inhabitants on Earth! that now,
While time was, our first parents^o had been warned
The coming of their secret foe, and 'scaped,
Haply so 'scaped, his mortal snare; for now
Satan, now first inflamed with rage,^o came down,
The tempter, ere the accuser,^o of mankind,
To wreak^o on innocent frail Man his loss
Of that first battle, and his flight to Hell—
Yet not rejoicing in his speed, though bold
Far off and fearless, nor with cause to boast,
Begins his dire attempt; which, nigh the birth
Now rolling, boils in his tumultuous breast
And like a devilish engine back recoils
Upon himself; horror and doubt distract
His troubled thoughts,^o and from the bottom stir
The Hell within him, for within him Hell
He brings, and round about him, nor from Hell
One step, no more than from himself, can fly
By change of place. Now conscience wakes despair
That slumbered, wakes the bitter memory
Of what he was, what is, and what must be
Worse; of worse deeds worse sufferings must ensue.
Sometimes towards Eden, which now in his view
Lay pleasant, his grieved look he fixes sad,
Sometimes towards Heaven and the full-blazing Sun,
Which now sat high in his meridian tower;
Then, much revolving,^o thus in sighs began:

1 **he** St. John. See Revelation, xii, 12. 6 **our first parents** cf. iii, 65 9 **inflamed with rage** Note the passage from the literal to the figurative in the repeated use of this phrase: ii, 581, 791. 10 **accuser** “The accuser of our brethren is cast down, which

accused them before our God day and night” (Rev. xii, 10). 11 **To wreak** Anglo-Saxon *wreacan*, to avenge 19 **troubled thoughts** cf. i, 557 31 **much revolving** a small instance of Milton’s profitably ambiguous syntax: “much” can be an adverb, or, Latin *multa volvens*, it can be a noun, the object of “revolving.” Satan twists and turns (inwardly as outwardly), and he ponders many things.

‘O thou that, with surpassing glory crowned,^o
Look’st from thy sole dominion like the god
Of this new World, at whose sight all the stars
Hide their diminished heads, to thee I call,
But with no friendly voice, and add thy name,
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams,
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy sphere,
Till pride and worse ambition threw me down,
Warring in Heaven against Heaven’s matchless King—
Ah wherefore? he deserved no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none, nor was his service hard.
What could be less than to afford him praise,
The easiest recompense, and pay him thanks,
How due! Yet all his good proved ill in me,
And wrought but malice; lifted up so high,
I ’sdained subjection, and thought one step higher
Would set me highest, and in a moment quit
The debt immense of endless gratitude,
So burdensome, still paying, still to owe,
Forgetful what from him I still received,
And understood not that a grateful mind
By owing owes not, but still pays, at once
Indebted and discharged; what burden then?
Oh, had his powerful destiny ordained
Me some inferior Angel, I had stood
Then happy; no unbounded hope had raised
Ambition. Yet why not? some other Power
As great might have aspired, and me, though mean,
Drawn to his part; but other Powers as great
Fell not, but stand unshaken, from within
Or from without, to all temptations armed.
Hadst thou the same free will and power to stand?
Thou hadst. Whom hast thou then, or what, to accuse,

32—41 Milton’s nephew said he saw this speech to the Sun early in the 1640s in what was then planned as a drama. C. S. Lewis observes of “and add thy name,” 36: “On the stage Satan would have had to do this in order to let the audience know whom he was addressing.”

But Heaven’s free love dealt equally to all?
Be then his love accursed, since, love or hate,
To me alike it deals eternal woe.^o
Nay, cursed be thou, since against his thy will
Chose freely what it now so justly rues.
Me miserable!^o which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell;^o
And, in the lowest deep,^o a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the Hell I suffer seems a Heaven.
O, then, at last relent; is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word

Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
 Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduced
 With other promises and other vaunts
 Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
 The Omnipotent. Ay me! they little know
 How dearly I abide^o that boast so vain,
 Under what torments inwardly I groan;
 While they adore me on the throne of Hell,
 With diadem and sceptre high advanced,
 The lower still I fall, only supreme
 In misery—such joy ambition finds!
 But say I could repent, and could obtain,
 By act of grace, my former state; how soon
 Would height recall high thoughts, how soon unsay
 What feigned submission swore; ease would recant
 Vows made in pain, as violent and void—
 For never can true reconciliation grow
 Where wounds of deadly hate^o have pierced so deep—
 Which would but lead me to a worse relapse
 And heavier fall; so should I purchase dear
 Short intermission, bought with double smart.
 This knows my Punisher; therefore as far
 From granting he, as I from begging, peace.

70 **eternal woe** cf. ii, 161, 695 73 **Me miserable!** Latin exclamatory accusative: *me miserum!* 75 cf. 20-21; i, 254-55 76 **the lowest deep** cf. ii, 392 87 **abide** suffer for 99 **deadly hate** cf. ii, 577

All hope excluded thus, behold, instead
 Of us, outcast, exiled, his new delight,
 Mankind, created, and for him this World.
 So farewell hope, and with hope, farewell fear,
 Farewell remorse! All good to me is lost;
 Evil, be thou my Good: by thee at least
 Divided empire with Heaven's King I hold,
 By thee, and more than half perhaps will reign;^o
 As Man erelong, and this new World, shall know.'^o
 Thus while he spake, each passion dimmed his face,
 Thrice changed with pale ire, envy, and despair,
 Which marred his borrowed visage, and betrayed
 Him counterfeit, if any eye beheld,
 For Heavenly minds from such distempers foul
 Are ever clear. Whereof he soon aware
 Each perturbation smoothed with outward calm,
 Artificer of fraud, and was the first
 That practised falsehood under saintly show,
 Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge;
 Yet not enough had practised to deceive
 Uriel, once warned, whose eye pursued him down
 The way he went, and on the Assyrian mount^o
 Saw him disfigured, more than could befall
 Spirit of happy sort: his gestures fierce
 He marked and mad demeanor, then alone,
 As he supposed, all unobserved, unseen.
 So on he fares,^o and to the border comes
 Of Eden, where delicious Paradise,^o
 Now nearer, crowns with her enclosure green,
 As with a rural mound, the champaign^o head

112 If God rules Heaven and Satan Hell, he who holds earth "will reign" over "more than half" of the universe. 126 **the Assyrian mount** see iii, 742 131 **on he fares** as in ii, 940 132 **Paradise** is the "eastward" (Gen. ii, 8) part of the tract of *Eden*. Cf.

209-10. Thus at the end of the poem Adam and Eve leave Paradise but are still in Eden (xii, 648-49). 134 **champaign** open, flat country. Lewis comments on 134—37: “The Freudian idea that the happy garden is an image of the human body would not have frightened Milton in the least.” It did not frighten Spenser in the Bower of Bliss (*Faerie Queene* II, xii, 43 ff.) and the House of Temperance (II, ix, 22 and 32), but before concluding with a scene from the now familiar *Lady Chatterley’s Lover* it should be noticed that Milton remains ambivalent in his combination of the inviting and the forbidden.

Of a steep wilderness, whose hairy sides
 With thicket overgrown, grotesque° and wild,
 Access denied; and overhead upgrew
 Insurmountable height of loftiest shade,
 Cedar, and pine, and fir, and branching palm,
 A sylvan scene, and, as the ranks ascend
 Shade above shade, a woody theatre
 Of stateliest view. Yet higher than their tops
 The verdurous wall of Paradise upsprung,
 Which to our general sire° gave prospect large
 Into his nether empire° neighbouring round.
 And higher than that wall a circling row
 Of goodliest trees, loaden with fairest fruit,
 Blossoms and fruits at once of golden hue,
 Appeared, with gay enamelled° colours mixed,
 On which the sun more glad impressed his beams
 Than in fair evening cloud, or humid bow,
 When God hath showered the earth: so lovely seemed
 That landscape; and of pure, now purer air
 Meets his approach, and to the heart inspires
 Vernal delight and joy, able to drive
 All sadness but despair. Now gentle gales,
 Fanning their odoriferous wings, dispense
 Native perfumes, and whisper whence they stole
 Those balmy spoils. As when to them who sail
 Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
 Mozambic,° off at sea north-east winds blow
 Sabean° odours from the spicy shore
 Of Araby the Blest, with such delay
 Well pleased they slack their course, and many a league
 Cheered with the grateful smell old Ocean smiles;
 So entertained those odorous sweets the Fiend
 Who came their bane, though with them better pleased
 Than Asmodæus with the fishy fume°

136 **grotesque** connected with grotto 144 **our general sire** as founder of the *genus humanum* 145 **nether empire** contrast ii, 296 149 **enamelled** see “Lycidas,” 139 161 **Mozambic** a renowned harbor, Portuguese East Africa opposite Madagascar. 162 **Sabean** Saba or Sheba was southern Arabia, called *Araby the Blest*, 163, for being the fertile portion. 168 ff. Milton emphasizes by this curious reference (“a remarkable association of fallen and unfallen odours”—F. Kermode) the foulness of the intruder, who, however, has not yet completely

That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse
 Of Tobit’s son, and with a vengeance sent
 From Media post to Egypt, there fast bound.
 Now to the ascent of that steep savage hill
 Satan had journeyed on, pensive and slow,
 But further way found none, so thick entwined,
 As one continued brake, the undergrowth
 Of shrubs and tangling bushes had perplexed°
 All path of man or beast that passed that way.

One gate there only was, and that looked east
 On the other side: which when the Arch-felon saw,
 Due entrance he disdained, and, in contempt,
 At one slight bound high overleaped all bound
 Of hill or highest wall and sheer within
 Lights on his feet. As when a prowling wolf,
 Whom hunger drives to seek new haunt for prey,
 Watching where shepherds pen their flocks at eve,
 In hurdled cotes amid the field secure,
 Leaps o'er the fence with ease into the fold;
 Or as a thief, bent to unhoard the cash
 Of some rich burgher, whose substantial doors,
 Cross-barred and bolted fast, fear no assault,^o
 In at the window climbs, or o'er the tiles;
 So clomb this first grand Thief into God's fold:
 So since into his Church lewd hirelings climb.
 Thence up he flew, and on the Tree of Life,^o
 The middle tree and highest there that grew,

realized his own foulness and still remembers the time when as the Talmudic "king of the demons" he would have slain Sara's eighth husband (as he had slain the previous seven), Tobias, "Tobit's son," if, by Raphael's advice, the latter had not burned the heart and liver of a fish on his wedding night, "the which smell when the evil spirit had smelled, he fled into the utmost parts of Egypt, and the angel bound him" (the Apocryphal Book of Tobit, viii, 3). 176 **perplexed** literally, entangled 190 **fear no assault** cf. ii, 343. The likely association is with the burgher in *Areopagitica* who searches out a minister "to whose care and credit he may commit the whole managing of his religious affairs. . . . To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion with all the locks and keys into his custody" (Columbia Milton, 333-34). 194 **the Tree of Life** Genesis ii, 9

Sat like a cormorant,^o yet not true life
 Thereby regained, but sat devising death
 To them who lived, nor on the virtue thought
 Of that life-giving plant, but only used
 For prospect what, well used, had been the pledge^o
 Of immortality. So little knows
 Any but God alone to value right
 The good before him, but perverts best things
 To worst abuse, or to their meanest use.
 Beneath him with new wonder now he views,
 To all delight of human sense exposed,
 In narrow room Nature's whole wealth, yea more—
 A Heaven on Earth: for blissful Paradise
 Of God the garden was, by him in the east
 Of Eden planted; Eden stretched her line
 From Auran^o eastward to the royal towers
 Of great Seleucia,^o built by Grecian kings,
 Or where the sons of Eden long before
 Dwelt in Telassar.^o In this pleasant soil
 His far more pleasant garden God ordained.
 Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
 All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste;
 And all amid them stood the Tree of Life,
 High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
 Of vegetable gold, and, next to life,
 Our death, the Tree of Knowledge, grew fast by,
 Knowledge of good, bought dear by knowing ill.
 Southward through Eden went a river large,
 Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
 Passed underneath ingulfed, for God had thrown

196 **cormorant** literally, “sea-raven,” like the vulture (iii, 431) an established symbol of voraciousness 200 ff. Milton draws a lesson out of the puzzling other tree, later the cause of an embarrassed qualification, xi, 95-96. 211 **Auran** Vulgate form of Haran, in Mesopotamia, the place whither Abraham migrated (Gen. xi, 31) 212 **great Seleucia** The adjective is Pliny’s to distinguish this city on the Tigris, southeast of Baghdad, from lesser cities of the same name. Its builder was Seleucus I Nicator, a general of Alexander the Great’s. 214 **Telassar** mentioned in 2 Kings xix, 12 and Isaiah, xxxvii, 12 as a city inhabited by “the children of Eden” and associated with places in Western Mesopotamia.

That mountain, as his garden-mould, high raised
 Upon the rapid current, which through veins
 Of porous earth with kindly° thirst updrawn
 Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
 Watered the garden, thence united fell
 Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
 Which from his darksome passage now appears,
 And now, divided into four main streams,
 Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
 And country whereof here needs no account,
 But rather to tell how, if Art could tell
 How, from that sapphire fount the crispèd° brooks,
 Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
 With mazy error° under pendent shades
 Ran nectar, visiting each plant, and fed
 Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice Art
 In beds and curious knots,° but Nature boon°
 Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,
 Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
 The open field, and where the unpierced shade
 Embrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place,
 A happy rural seat of various view:
 Groves whose rich trees wept° odorous gums and balm;
 Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
 Hung amiable, Hesperian° fables true,
 If true, here only, and of delicious taste.
 Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
 Grazing the tender herb, were interposed,
 Or palmy hillock or the flowery lap
 Of some irriguous valley spread her store,
 Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.°
 Another side, umbrageous grots and caves
 Of cool recess, o’er which the mantling vine°

228 **kindly** natural, as at 668 237 **crispèd** rippling 239 **error** the literal Latin sense of *wandering* 242 **curious knots** elaborate flower beds **boon** bounteous 248 **wept** “The melancholy of our feeling that Eden must be lost so soon, once attached to its vegetation, makes us feel that it is inherently melancholy” (William Empson). 250 **Hesperian** see iii, 568 256 **without thorn the rose** “Before man’s fall, the rose was born/ St. Ambrose says, without the thorn.” Robert Herrick, “The Rose.” 258 **mantling** vine had appeared in “Comus,” 294.

Lays forth her purple grape and gently creeps
 Luxuriant; meanwhile murmuring waters fall
 Down the slope hills, dispersed, or in a lake,
 That to the fringed bank with myrtle crowned
 Her crystal mirror holds, unite their streams.
 The birds their choir apply; airs,° vernal airs,
 Breathing the smell of field and grove, attune
 The trembling leaves, while universal° Pan,
 Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,

Led on the eternal Spring. Not that fair field
 Of Enna,^o where Proserpin gathering flowers,
 Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
 Was gathered, which cost Ceres all that pain
 To seek her through the world, nor that sweet grove
 Of Daphne,^o by Orontes and the inspired
 Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
 Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle,^o
 Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,^o
 Whom Gentiles Ammon call, and Libyan Jove,
 Hid Amalthea, and her florid son,
 Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye;
 Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard,
 Mount Amara (though this by some supposed
 True Paradise) under the Ethiop line^o
 By Nilus' head, enclosed with shining rock,
 A whole day's journey high, but wide remote
 From this Assyrian garden, where the Fiend

264 **airs** in context a double meaning 266 **universal** "for *Pan* signifieth all" (E. K.'s gloss to Spenser's *Shephards Calender*). 269 **Enna** This celebrated grove in Sicily, according to Ovid, was the site of the abduction of Proserpina, daughter of Ceres the Roman goddess of agriculture. Dis or Pluto took her to be Queen of the Lower World. The connection with Eve, who is also to be snatched by Death and Hell, operates powerfully in the first part of a characteristic multiple simile. 273 **Daphne** the name of a grove by the Orontes river in Syria, not far from Antioch, where Apollo had a temple 275 **Nyseian isle** Nysa (from which Dionysus, nurtured there, derived his name) was near Tunis in North Africa (cf. "Libyan," 277). 276 **Cham** Vulgate for Ham, Noah's son 281-82 Samuel Purchas wrote of *Mount Amara*: "This hill is situate as the navel of that Ethiopian body, and center of their empire, under the equinoctial line."

Saw undelighted all delight, all kind
 Of living creatures, new to sight and strange.
 Two of far nobler shape, erect and tall,
 Godlike erect, with native honour clad
 In naked majesty, seemed lords of all,
 And worthy seemed, for in their looks divine
 The image of their glorious Maker shone,
 Truth, wisdom, sanctitude severe and pure—
 Severe, but in true filial freedom placed,
 Whence true authority in men: though both
 Not equal, as their sex not equal seemed;^o
 For contemplation he and valour formed,
 For softness she and sweet attractive grace;^o
 He for God only, she for God in him.^o
 His fair large front and eye sublime declared
 Absolute rule, and hyacinthine^o locks
 Round from his parted forelock manly hung
 Clustering, but not beneath his shoulders broad:^o
 She, as a veil down to the slender waist,
 Her unadorned golden tresses wore
 Dishevelled, but in wanton ringlets waved
 As the vine curls her tendrils, which implied
 Subjection, but required with gentle sway,
 And by her yielded, by him best received,
 Yielded with coy^o submission, modest pride,
 And sweet, reluctant, amorous delay.
 Nor those mysterious parts were then concealed;
 Then was not guilty shame—dishonest^o Shame

296 ff. The sentiments expressed here, on the differences between the sexes, outrageous to some modern readers, were commonplace in the Renaissance. 298 **attractive grace** cf. ii, 762 299 “He not for her, but she for him” *Tetrachordon* (Columbia Milton, p. 76). These are versions of St. Paul’s “Neither was the man created for the woman, but the woman for the man.” 1 Corinthians xi, 9. 301 **hyacinthine** perhaps, as beautiful as Hyacinth, whom Apollo loved; or dark (maybe specifically deep red—cf. “sanguine flower,” “Lycidas,” 106) and curly like the flower; or flowing. See *Odyssey* VI, 231. 303 **but not beneath his shoulders broad** a hit at the Cavaliers, possibly; cf. 1 Corinthians xi, 14-15. A 1654 publication by the preacher Thomas Hall was *Loathsomeness of Long Hair*. 310 **coy** The word has degenerated; it meant *shy*. 313 **dishonest** loose, unchaste

Of Nature’s works, Honour dishonourable,
 Sin-bred, how have ye troubled all mankind
 With shows instead, mere shows of seeming pure,
 And banished from man’s life his happiest life,
 Simplicity and spotless innocence.
 So passed they naked on, nor shunned the sight
 Of God or Angel, for they thought no ill;
 So hand in hand^o they passed, the loveliest pair
 That ever since in love’s embraces met—
 Adam, the goodliest man of men since born
 His sons; the fairest of her daughters Eve.^o
 Under a tuft of shade that on a green
 Stood whispering soft, by a fresh fountain-side,
 They sat them down, and, after no more toil
 Of their sweet gardening labour than sufficed
 To recommend cool Zephyr,^o and made ease
 More easy, wholesome thirst and appetite
 More grateful, to their supper-fruits they fell,
 Nectarine fruits, which the compliant^o boughs
 Yielded them, sidelong as they sat recline
 On the soft downy bank damasked with flowers.
 The savoury pulp they chew, and in the rind,
 Still as they thirsted, scoop the brimming stream;
 Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
 Wanted, nor youthful dalliance, as beseems
 Fair couple linked in happy nuptial league,
 Alone as they. About them frisking played
 All beasts of the earth, since wild, and of all chase
 In wood or wilderness, forest or den;
 Sporting the lion ramped, and in his paw
 Dandled the kid; bears, tigers, ounces, pards,
 Gambolled before them; the unwieldy elephant,
 To make them mirth, used all his might, and wreathed
 His lithe proboscis; close the serpent sly,

321 **hand in hand** cf. 689 and xii, 647 323, 324 The superlatives represent a Greek construction that includes the comparative. 329 **Zephyr** the west (spring) wind; compare the “General Prologue” to Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, 5 ff. 332 **compliant** in the literal sense of *bending*, in addition to the figurative

Insinuating,^o wove with Gordian twine^o
 His braided train, and of his fatal guile
 Gave proof unheeded. Others on the grass
 Couched, and, now filled with pasture, gazing sat,
 Or bedward ruminating; for the sun,
 Declined, was hasting now with prone career
 To the Ocean Isles, and in the ascending scale
 Of Heaven the stars that usher evening rose;
 When Satan still in gaze, as first he stood,

Scarce thus at length failed speech recovered sad:
 'O Hell! what do mine eyes with grief behold?
 Into our room of bliss thus high advanced
 Creatures of other mould—Earth—born perhaps,
 Not Spirits, yet to Heavenly Spirits bright
 Little inferior"—whom my thoughts pursue
 With wonder, and could love, so lively shines
 In them divine resemblance, and such grace
 The hand that formed them on their shape hath poured.
 Ah! gentle pair, ye little think how nigh
 Your change approaches, when all these delights
 Will vanish, and deliver ye to woe,
 More woe, the more your taste is now of joy:
 Happy, but for so happy ill secured
 Long to continue, and this high seat, your Heaven,
 Ill fenced for Heaven to keep out such a foe
 As now is entered; yet no purposed foe
 To you whom I could pity thus forlorn,
 Though I unpitied. League with you I seek
 And mutual amity, so strait, so close,
 That I with you must dwell, or you with me,
 Henceforth. My dwelling, haply, may not please,
 Like this fair Paradise, your sense; yet such
 Accept your Maker's work; he gave it me,
 Which I as freely give. Hell shall unfold,
 To entertain you two, her widest gates,
 And send forth all her kings; there will be room,
 Not like these narrow limits, to receive

348 **Insinuating** moving sinuously (Latin *sinus*, folds) **Gordian twine** intricate tangle, like the Gordian knot that Alexander the Great cut with his sword. 362 **Little inferior** "A little lower than the angels." Psalms viii, 5

Your numerous offspring; if no better place,
 Thank him who puts me, loath, to this revenge
 On you, who wrong me not, for him who wronged.
 And, should I at your harmless innocence
 Melt, as I do, yet public reason just,
 Honour and empire with revenge enlarged
 By conquering this new world, compels me now
 To do what else, though damned, I should abhor.'

So spake the Fiend, and with necessity,
 The tyrant's plea, excused his devilish deeds.
 Then from his lofty stand on that high tree
 Down he alights among the sportful herd
 Of those four-footed kinds, himself now one,
 Now other, as their shape served best his end
 Nearer to view his prey, and, unespied,
 To mark what of their state he more might learn
 By word or action marked. About them round
 A lion now he stalks with fiery glare;
 Then as a tiger, who by chance hath spied
 In some purlieu° two gentle fawns at play,
 Straight couches; then, rising, changes oft
 His couchant watch, as one who chose his ground,
 Whence rushing he might surest seize them both
 Gripped in each paw: when Adam, first of men,
 To first of women, Eve, thus moving speech,
 Turned him all ear to hear new utterance flow:
 'Sole partner and sole part of all these joys,
 Dearer thyself than all, needs must the Power
 That made us, and for us this ample World,

Be infinitely good, and of his good
 As liberal and free as infinite,
 That raised us from the dust, and placed us here
 In all this happiness, who at his hand
 Have nothing merited, nor can perform
 Aught whereof he hath need; he who requires
 From us no other service than to keep^o

404 **purlieu** a tract of land on the fringe of a forest 420 ff. It is unfortunate, and perhaps psychologically significant (of awe, or of temptation, or of Adam's didactic tendency?), and certainly dramatically convenient that the first words to come from Adam should deal with the forbidden tree.

This one, this easy charge, of all the trees
 In Paradise that bear delicious fruit
 So various, not to taste that only Tree
 Of Knowledge, planted by the Tree of Life;
 So near grows Death to Life, whate'er Death is—
 Some dreadful thing no doubt; for well thou know'st
 God hath pronounced it Death to taste that Tree:
 The only sign of our obedience left
 Among so many signs of power and rule
 Conferred upon us, and dominion given
 Over all other creatures that possess
 Earth, Air, and Sea. Then let us not think hard
 One easy prohibition, who enjoy
 Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
 Unlimited of manifold delights,
 But let us ever praise him, and extol
 His bounty, following our delightful task,
 To prune these growing plants, and tend these flowers;^o
 Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet.'

To whom thus Eve replied: 'O thou for whom
 And from whom I was formed flesh of thy flesh,
 And without whom am to no end, my guide
 And head, what thou hast said is just and right.^o
 For we to him, indeed, all praises owe,
 And daily thanks—I chiefly, who enjoy
 So far the happier lot, enjoying thee
 Pre-eminent by so much odds, while thou
 Like consort to thyself canst nowhere find.
 That day I oft remember, when from sleep
 I first awaked, and found myself reposed,
 Under a shade, on^o flowers, much wondering where
 And what I was, whence thither brought, and how.
 Not distant far from thence a murmuring sound
 Of waters issued from a cave, and spread
 Into a liquid plain; then stood unmoved,
 Pure as the expanse of Heaven. I thither went
 With unexperienced thought, and laid me down
 On the green bank, to look into the clear

438 The origin of this occupation is in Genesis ii, 15. Cf. 618 ff. 443 **just and right** key words, ii, 18; iii, 98 451 **on** 1674 has *of*.

Smooth lake, that to me seemed another sky.
 As I bent down to look, just opposite,^o
 A shape within the watery gleam appeared,
 Bending to look on me. I started back,
 It started back; but pleased I soon returned,
 Pleased it returned as soon with answering looks
 Of sympathy and love; there I had fixed

Mine eyes till now, and pined with vain desire,
 Had not a voice thus warned me: "What thou seest,
 What there thou seest, fair creature, is thyself;
 With thee it came and goes; but follow me,
 And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
 Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
 Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
 Inseparably thine, to him shalt bear
 Multitudes like thyself, and thence be called
 Mother of human race." What could I do,
 But follow straight, invisibly thus led?
 Till I espied thee, fair, indeed, and tall,
 Under a platan;^o yet methought less fair,
 Less winning soft, less amiably mild,
 Than that smooth watery image. Back I turned;
 Thou, following, cried'st aloud, "Return, fair Eve;
 Whom fliest thou? Whom thou fliest, of him thou art,
 His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
 Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart,
 Substantial life, to have thee by my side
 Henceforth an individual^o solace dear:
 Part of my soul I seek thee, and the claim
 My other half." With that thy gentle hand
 Seized mine; I yielded, and from that time see
 How beauty is excelled by manly grace
 And wisdom, which alone is truly fair.'

So spake our general mother,^o and, with eyes
 Of conjugal attraction unreprieved,
 And meek surrender, half-embracing leaned

460 ff. This Narcissus-like recollection, with its implication of vanity, is meant to
 put the reader in mind that self-love in that case was death ("pined with vain desire,"
 466). 478 **platan** the Oriental plane tree 486 **individual** undividable, inseparable
 492 **our general mother** cf. 144

On our first father; half her swelling breast
 Naked met his, under the flowing gold
 Of her loose tresses hid. He, in delight
 Both of her beauty and submissive charms,
 Smiled with superior love, as Jupiter
 On Juno smiles when he impregns^o the clouds
 That shed May flowers, and pressed her matron lip
 With kisses pure. Aside the Devil turned
 For envy, yet with jealous leer malign
 Eyed them askance, and to himself thus 'plained:
 'Sight hateful, sight tormenting! Thus these two,^o
 Imparadised in one another's arms,
 The happier Eden, shall enjoy their fill
 Of bliss on bliss, while I to Hell am thrust,
 Where neither joy nor love,^o but fierce desire,
 Among our other torments not the least,
 Still unfulfilled, with pain of longing pines!
 Yet let me not forget what I have gained
 From their own mouths. All is not theirs, it seems;
 One fatal tree there stands, of Knowledge called,
 Forbidden them to taste. Knowledge forbidden?
 Suspicious, reasonless. Why should their Lord
 Envy them that? Can it be sin to know?^o
 Can it be death? And do they only stand
 By ignorance? Is that their happy state,
 The proof of their obedience and their faith?
 O fair foundation laid whereon to build

Their ruin! Hence I will excite their minds
With more desire to know, and to reject
Envious commands, invented with design

500 **impregns** impregnates 505 ff. The distinguished authority on Puritanism, William Haller, observes that marriage “is the consummation of God’s plan of creation on earth. It is the projection of the divine order, of the order of nature and of the soul, into human society. It is the whole of human society in germ, the living microcosm, truly, of family, church, and state. It is, in consequence, the prime object of Satan’s envy, and its disruption the first task to which he addressed himself on this earth.” “‘Hail Wedded Love’,” *ELH*, XIII (1946), 97. 509 **neither joy nor love** cf. iii, 67, 338 517 ff. A corrupt version of the attitude made famous in *Areopagitica*.

To keep them low, whom knowledge might exalt
Equal with gods. Aspiring° to be such,
They taste and die: what likelier can ensue?
But first with narrow search I must walk round
This garden, and no corner leave unspied;
A chance but chance may lead where I may meet
Some wandering Spirit of Heaven, by fountain-side,
Or in thick shade retired, from him to draw
What further would be learned. Live while ye may,
Yet happy pair; enjoy, till I return,
Short pleasures, for long woes are to succeed!’
So saying, his proud step he scornful turned,
But with sly circumspection,° and began
Through wood, through waste, o’er hill, o’er dale, his roam.
Meanwhile in utmost longitude, where Heaven
With Earth and Ocean meets, the setting Sun
Slowly descended, and with right aspect°
Against the eastern° gate of Paradise
Levelled his evening rays. It was a rock
Of alabaster, piled up to the clouds,
Conspicuous far, winding with one ascent
Accessible from Earth, one entrance high;
The rest was craggy cliff, that overhung
Still as it rose, impossible to climb.
Betwixt these rocky pillars Gabriel sat,
Chief of the angelic guards, awaiting night;
About him exercised heroic games
The unarmed youth of Heaven; but nigh at hand
Celestial armoury, shields, helms, and spears,
Hung high, with diamond flaming and with gold.
Thither came Uriel, gliding through the even
On a sunbeam, swift as a shooting star
In autumn thwarts° the night, when vapours fired
Impress the air, and shows the mariner
From what point of his compass to beware

526 **Aspiring** cf. the first use of this word, i, 38 537 **circumspection** cf. ii, 414 541 **right aspect** direct view 542 eastern Keightley thought this a slip for “western,” but it may be that the setting sun is directing its rays against the inner side of the “alabaster” (but later called “ivory,” 778) gate. 557 **thwarts** literally, crosses

Impetuous winds. He thus began in haste:
‘Gabriel, to thee thy course by lot hath given
Charge and strict watch that to this happy place
No evil thing approach or enter in.
This day at height of noon came to my sphere
A Spirit, zealous, as he seemed, to know
More of the Almighty’s works, and chiefly Man,°
God’s latest image. I described his way

Bent all on speed, and marked his aery gait,
 But in the mount that lies from Eden north,
 Where he first lighted, soon discerned his looks
 Alien from Heaven, with passions foul obscured.
 Mine eye pursued him still, but under shade
 Lost sight of him. One of the banished crew,
 I fear, hath ventured from the deep, to raise
 New troubles; him thy care must be to find.'

To whom the winged Warrior thus returned:
 'Uriel, no wonder if thy perfect sight,
 Amid the Sun's bright circle where thou sitt'st,
 See far and wide. In at this gate none pass
 The vigilance^o here placed but such as come
 Well known from Heaven, and since meridian hour
 No creature thence. If Spirit of other sort,
 So minded, have o'erleaped these earthly bounds
 On purpose, hard thou know'st it to exclude
 Spiritual substance with corporeal bar.
 But if within the circuit of these walks,
 In whatsoever shape, he lurk of whom
 Thou tell'st, by morrow dawning I shall know.'

So promised he, and Uriel to his charge
 Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised
 Bore him slope downward to the Sun, now fallen
 Beneath the Azores, whither^o the prime orb,
 Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
 Diurnal, or this less voluble Earth,^o

566 **chiefly Man** This connects with iii, 663, as iii, 664, "chief delight," contrasts with iii, 168. 580 **vigilance** an abstract for a concrete, the angelic watch or guard
 592 **whither** Some editors read *whether*. 594 Milton keeps his poem open to both the Ptolemaic (fixed earth) and Copernican explanations; cf. viii.

By shorter flight to the east, had left him there
 Arraying with reflected purple and gold
 The clouds that on his western throne attend.
 Now came still Evening on, and Twilight grey
 Had in her sober livery all things clad;
 Silence accompanied; for beast and bird,
 They to their grassy couch, these to their nests
 Were slunk, all but the wakeful nightingale;
 She all night long her amorous descant sung;
 Silence was pleased: now glowed the firmament
 With living sapphires; Hesperus, that led
 The starry host, rode brightest, till the Moon,
 Rising in clouded majesty, at length
 Apparent queen, unveiled her peerless light,
 And o'er the dark her silver mantle threw.

When Adam thus to Eve: 'Fair consort, the hour
 Of night, and all things now retired to rest,
 Mind us of like repose; since God hath set
 Labour and rest, as day and night, to men
 Successive, and the timely dew of sleep,
 Now falling with soft slumberous weight, inclines
 Our eyelids. Other creatures all day long
 Rove idle, unemployed, and less need rest;
 Man hath his daily work of body or mind
 Appointed, which declares his dignity,
 And the regard of Heaven on all his ways;
 While other animals unactive range,
 And of their doings God takes no account.
 To-morrow, ere fresh morning streak the east

With first approach of light, we must be risen,
 And at our pleasant labour, to reform
 Yon flowery arbours, yonder alleys green,
 Our walks at noon^o with branches overgrown,
 That mock our scant manuring^o and require
 More hands than ours to lop their wanton growth.
 Those blossoms also, and those dropping gums,
 That lie bestrewn, unsightly and unsmooth,

627 **walks at noon** in consideration of the first pair's brevity of existence so far,
 changed to the singular in 1674; cf. the rhyming phrase at 655 628 **manuring**
 cultivating (with the hands, Latin)

Ask riddance, if we mean to tread with ease.
 Meanwhile, as Nature wills, Night bids us rest.'
 To whom thus Eve, with perfect beauty adorned:
 'My author and disposer, what thou bidd'st
 Unargued I obey; so God ordains:
 God is thy law, thou mine: to know no more
 Is woman's happiest knowledge, and her praise.
 With thee conversing, I forget all time,
 All seasons, and their change; all please alike.
 Sweet is the breath of Morn, her rising sweet,^o
 With charm^o of earliest birds; pleasant the Sun,
 When first on this delightful land he spreads
 His orient beams, on herb, tree, fruit, and flower,
 Glistering with dew; fragrant the fertile Earth
 After soft showers, and sweet the coming-on
 Of grateful Evening mild; then silent Night,
 With this her solemn bird, and this fair Moon,
 And these the gems of Heaven, her starry train;
 But neither breath of Morn, when she ascends
 With charm of earliest birds, nor rising Sun^o
 On this delightful land, nor herb, fruit, flower,
 Glistering with dew, nor fragrance after shower,
 Nor grateful Evening mild, nor silent Night,
 With this her solemn bird, nor walk by moon,
 Or glittering starlight, without thee is sweet.
 But wherefore all night long shine these? for whom
 This glorious sight, when sleep hath shut all eyes?'

To whom our general ancestor replied:
 'Daughter of God and Man, accomplished Eve,
 Those have their course to finish round the Earth
 By morrow evening, and from land to land
 In order, though to nations yet unborn,
 Ministering light prepared, they set and rise,
 Lest total darkness should by night regain
 Her old possession, and extinguish life

641-56 The most brilliant example in English of the figure of repetition known as
 epanadiplosis or "the recapitulator": a series returning to the word with which it
 began, an exquisite weaving and unweaving, the negatives marking the principal
 points of detachment as the shuttle, going now in reverse direction, unravels the
 fabric. 642 **charm** song (Latin *carmen*) 651 **rising Sun** mentioned at iii, 551

In nature and all things, which these soft fires
 Not only enlighten, but with kindly heat
 Of various influence foment and warm,
 Temper or nourish, or in part shed down
 Their stellar virtue on all kinds that grow
 On Earth, made hereby apter to receive
 Perfection from the Sun's more potent ray.

These, then, though unbeheld in deep of night,
 Shine not in vain. Nor think, though men were none,
 That Heaven would want spectators, God want praise.
 Millions of spiritual creatures walk the Earth
 Unseen, both when we wake and when we sleep;°
 All these with ceaseless praise his works behold
 Both day and night. How often, from the steep
 Of echoing hill or thicket, have we heard
 Celestial voices to the midnight air,
 Sole, or responsive each to other's note,
 Singing their great Creator; oft in bands
 While they keep watch, or nightly rounding walk,
 With heavenly touch of instrumental sounds
 In full harmonic number joined, their songs
 Divide the night, and lift our thoughts to Heaven.'

Thus talking, hand in hand alone they passed
 On to their blissful bower. It was a place
 Chosen by the sovran Planter, when he framed
 All things to Man's delightful use; the roof
 Of thickest covert was inwoven shade,
 Laurel and myrtle, and what higher grew
 Of firm and fragrant leaf; on either side
 Acanthus,° and each odorous bushy shrub,
 Fenced up the verdant wall; each beauteous flower,
 Iris all hues, roses, and jessamine,

677-78 Compare "Sonnet on His Blindness": ". . . thousands at His bidding speed,/ And post o'er land and ocean without rest." 696 **Acanthus** species of plants native to the warmer regions of the Old World, having large, deeply cut, shining leaves that, models for decoration in Greek and Roman architecture, in particular the Corinthian column, perhaps contributed to Milton's train of thought—"Fenced up the verdant wall," 697

Reared high their flourished° heads between, and wrought
 Mosaic; under foot the violet,
 Crocus, and hyacinth, with rich inlay
 Broi'dered the ground, more coloured than with stone°
 Of costliest emblem; other creature here,
 Beast, bird, insect, or worm, durst enter none,
 Such was their awe of Man. In shadier° bower
 More sacred and sequestered, though but feigned,
 Pan or Sylvanus never slept, nor Nymph,
 Nor Faunus° haunted. Here, in close recess,
 With flowers, garlands, and sweet-smelling herbs,
 Espoused Eve decked first her nuptial bed,
 And heavenly choirs the hymenean sung,
 What day the genial Angel to our sire
 Brought her, in naked beauty more adorned,
 More lovely, than Pandora, whom the gods
 Endowed with all their gifts; and, O! too like°
 In sad event, when, to the unwiser son
 Of Japhet brought by Hermes, she ensnared
 Mankind with her fair looks, to be avenged
 On him who had stole° Jove's authentic fire.

Thus at their shady lodge arrived, both stood,
 Both turned, and under open sky adored
 The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth, and Heaven,
 Which they beheld, the Moon's resplendent globe,
 And starry Pole: 'Thou also mad'st the Night,
 Maker Omnipotent, and thou the Day
 Which we, in our appointed work employed,
 Have finished, happy in our mutual help

And mutual love, the crown of all our bliss
Ordained by thee; and this delicious place,

699 **flourished** growing luxuriantly, with some play on *flowers* 700-02 This is very close to *Iliad* XIV, 347—49; cf. ix, 1027 ff. 705 **shadier** the *r* that made *it* comparative is not in the 1674 text. 707—08 All are wood deities. 714-15 Milton translates the name *Pandora*, “all . . . gifts.” She was brought “to the unwiser son/ Of Japhet” (716-17), Epimetheus, as the gods’ revenge for Prometheus’s theft of fire for man, for there came with her a box containing all human ills, upon the opening of which all escaped and spread over the earth, Hope alone remaining. 719 **stole** perhaps a misprint for *stolen*, used elsewhere, x, 20

For us too large, where thy abundance wants
Partakers, and uncropped falls to the ground.
But thou hast promised from us two a race
To fill the Earth, who shall with us extol
Thy goodness infinite, both when we wake,
And when we seek, as now, thy gift of sleep.’

This said unanimous, and other rites
Observing none, but adoration pure,^o
Which God likes best, into their inmost bower
Handed they went, and, eased the putting-off
These troublesome disguises which we wear,
Straight side by side were laid, nor turned, I ween,
Adam from his fair spouse, nor Eve the rites
Mysterious of connubial love refused:
Whatever hypocrites austere talk
Of purity, and place, and innocence,
Defaming as impure what God declares
Pure, and commands to some, leaves free to all.
Our Maker bids increase; who bids abstain
But our destroyer, foe to God and Man?
Hail, wedded Love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety^o
In Paradise of all things common else!
By thee adulterous lust was driven from men
Among the bestial herds to range; by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets,
Whose bed is undefiled and chaste pronounced,
Present, or past, as saints and patriarchs used.
Here Love his golden shafts^o employs, here lights
His constant lamp, and waves his purple wings,
Reigns here and revels; not in the bought smile

736-37 Adam and Eve are Puritans, in the sense that they worship simply and spontaneously, without rituals or prayer books. Cf. xii, 534. 751 **sole propriety** sole exclusiveness of possession (property) 763 **golden shafts** According to Ovid, *Metamorphoses* I, 468, Cupid also possessed leaden arrows that repelled love.

Of harlots, loveless, joyless, unendeared,
Casual fruition; nor in court amours,
Mixed dance, or wanton mask, or midnight ball,
Or serenade, which the starved lover sings
To his proud fair, best quitted with disdain.
These, lulled by nightingales, embracing slept,
And on their naked limbs the flowery roof
Showered roses, which the morn repaired. Sleep on,

Blest pair, and, O! yet happiest, if ye seek
No happier state,^o and know to know no more.

Now had Night measured with her shadowy cone
Halfway uphill this vast sublunar vault,
And from their ivory port the Cherubim
Forth issuing at the accustomed hour stood armed
To their night-watches in warlike parade,
When Gabriel to his next in power thus spake:

‘Uzziel,^o half these draw off, and coast the south
With strictest watch; these other wheel the north;
Our circuit meets full west.’ As flame they part,
Half wheeling to the shield, half to the spear.
From these, two strong and subtle Spirits he called
That near him stood, and gave them thus in charge:

‘Ithuriel and Zephon,^o with winged speed
Search through this Garden; leave unsearched no nook,
But chiefly where those two fair creatures lodge,
Now laid perhaps asleep, secure^o of harm.
This evening from the Sun’s decline arrived
Who tells of some infernal Spirit seen
Hitherward bent (who could have thought?), escaped
The bars of Hell,^o on errand bad, no doubt;
Such, where ye find, seize fast, and hither bring.’

So saying, on he led his radiant files,
Dazzling the Moon; these^o to the bower direct^o
In search of whom they sought. Him there they found
Squat like a toad, close at the ear of Eve,^o
Assaying by his devilish art to reach

775 **happier** state cf. ii, 24 782 **Uzziel** “Strength of God” 788 Ithuriel and **Zephon**
appropriately, “Search of God” and “Searcher”; cf. 789 791 **secure** Latin, without
worry, unsuspecting 795 **bars of Hell** cf. iii, 82 798 **these** i.e., Ithuriel and Zephon
direct straightway 800 A most deliberate reduction of Satan’s glamour

The organs of her fancy, and with them forge
Illusions as he list, phantasms and dreams;
Or if, inspiring venom, he might taint
The animal spirits,^o that from pure blood arise
Like gentle breaths from rivers pure, thence raise,
At least distempered, discontented thoughts,
Vain hopes, vain aims, inordinate desires,
Blown up with high conceits engendering pride.
Him thus intent Ithuriel with his spear
Touched lightly, for no falsehood can endure
Touch of celestial temper, but returns
Of force to its own likeness. Up he starts,
Discovered and surprised. As, when a spark
Lights on a heap of nitrous powder^o laid
Fit for the tun,^o some magazine to store
Against a rumoured war, the smutty grain,
With sudden blaze diffused, inflames the air,
So started up, in his own shape, the Fiend.
Back stepped those two fair Angels, half amazed
So sudden to behold the grisly King;
Yet thus, unmoved with fear, accost him soon:

‘Which of those rebel Spirits adjudged to Hell
Com’st thou, escaped thy prison? and, transformed,
Why satt’st thou like an enemy in wait,
Here watching at the head of these that sleep?’

‘Know ye not, then,’ said Satan, filled with scorn,
‘Know ye not me? Ye knew me once no mate
For you, there sitting where ye durst not soar!

Not to know me argues^o yourselves unknown,
 The lowest of your throng; or, if ye know,
 Why ask ye, and superfluous begin
 Your message, like to end as much in vain?
 To whom thus Zephon, answering scorn with scorn:
 ‘Think not, revolted Spirit, thy shape the same,
 Or undiminished brightness, to be known
 As when thou stood’st in Heaven upright and pure.

805 **The animal spirits** (the adjective comes from Latin animal soul—*inspiring venom* [804] is *Aeneid* VIII, 351, “*vipeream inspirans -animam*”) went to the brain.
 815 **nitrous powder** gunpowder 816 **tun** storage barrel 830 **argues** proves; cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 1081-82.

That glory then, when thou no more wast good,
 Departed from thee; and thou resemblest now
 Thy sin and place of doom obscure and foul.
 But come; for thou, be sure, shalt give account
 To him who sent us, whose charge is to keep
 This place inviolable, and these from harm.’

So spake the Cherub, and his grave rebuke,
 Severe in youthful beauty, added grace
 Invincible. Abashed the Devil stood,
 And felt how awful goodness is, and saw
 Virtue in her shape how lovely, saw, and pined
 His loss, but chiefly to find here observed
 His lustre visibly impaired, yet seemed
 Undaunted. ‘If I must contend,’ said he,
 ‘Best with the best, the sender, not the sent,
 Or all at once: more glory will be won,
 Or less be lost.’ ‘Thy fear,’ said Zephon bold,
 ‘Will save us trial what the least can do
 Single against thee wicked, and thence weak.’

The Fiend replied not, overcome with rage,
 But, like a proud steed reined, went haughty on,
 Champing his iron curb. To strive or fly
 He held it vain; awe from above had quelled
 His heart, not else dismayed. Now drew they nigh
 The western point, where those half-rounding guards
 Just met, and, closing, stood in squadron joined,
 Awaiting next command. To whom their chief,
 Gabriel, from the front thus called aloud:

‘O friends, I hear the tread of nimble feet^o
 Hasting this way, and now by glimpse discern
 Ithuriel and Zephon through the shade,
 And with them comes a third, of regal port
 But faded splendour wan, who by his gait
 And fierce demeanour seems the Prince of Hell—
 Not likely to part hence without contest;^o
 Stand firm, for in his look defiance lours.’

He scarce had ended when those two approached,
 And brief related whom they brought, where found,

866-73 A speech that is probably a remnant of the days when *Paradise Lost* was a drama. 872 **contest** accented on the second syllable

How busied, in what form and posture couched.

To whom, with stern regard, thus Gabriel spake:
 ‘Why hast thou, Satan, broke the bounds prescribed
 To thy transgressions, and disturbed the charge
 Of others, who approve not to transgress
 By thy example, but have power and right

To question thy bold entrance on this place;
Employed, it seems, to violate sleep, and those
Whose dwelling God hath planted here in bliss?’

To whom thus Satan, with contemptuous brow:
‘Gabriel, thou hadst in Heaven the esteem of wise,
And such I held thee, but this question asked
Puts me in doubt. Lives there who loves his pain?
Who would not, finding way, break loose from Hell,
Though thither doomed? Thou wouldst thyself, no doubt,
And boldly venture to whatever place
Farthest from pain, where thou mightst hope to change
Torment with ease, and soonest recompense
Dole with delight;° which in this place I sought:
To thee no reason, who know’st only good,
But evil hast not tried. And wilt object
His will who bound us? Let him surer bar
His iron gates, if he intends our stay
In that dark durance. Thus much what was asked;
The rest is true: they found me where they say,
But that implies not violence or harm.’

Thus he in scorn. The warlike Angel moved,
Disdainfully half smiling, thus replied:
‘O loss of one in Heaven to judge of wise,
Since Satan fell, whom folly overthrew,
And now returns him from his prison ‘scaped,
Gravely in doubt whether to hold them wise
Or not, who ask what boldness brought him hither
Unlicensed from his bounds in Hell prescribed!
So wise he judges it to fly from pain,
However, and to ‘scape his punishment.
So judge thou still, presumptuous till the wrath,
Which thou incurr’st by flying, meet thy flight
Sevenfold, and scourge that wisdom back to Hell

894 **Dole with delight** cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 13: “In equal scale weighing delight and
dole” (Claudius)

Which taught thee yet no better that no pain
Can equal anger infinite provoked.
But wherefore thou alone? Wherefore with thee
Came not all Hell broke loose?° Is pain to them
Less pain, less to be fled? or thou than they
Less hardy to endure? Courageous chief,
The first in flight from pain, hadst thou alleged
To thy deserted host this cause of flight,
Thou surely hadst not come sole fugitive.’

To which the Fiend thus answered, frowning stern:
‘Not that I less endure, or shrink from pain,
Insulting Angel; well thou know’st I stood
Thy fiercest, when in battle to thy aid
The° blasting volleyed thunder made all speed
And seconded thy else not dreaded spear.
But still thy words at random, as before
Argue thy inexperience what behooves,
From hard assays and ill successes past,
A faithful leader—not to hazard all
Through ways of danger by himself untried.
I, therefore, I alone, first undertook
To wing the desolate abyss, and spy
This new-created World, whereof in Hell
Fame is not silent, here in hope to find
Better abode, and my afflicted Powers

To settle here on Earth, or in mid Air;
 Though for possession put to try once more
 What thou and thy gay legions dare against,
 Whose easier business were to serve their Lord
 High up in Heaven, with songs to hymn his throne,
 And° practised distances to cringe, not fight.’

To whom the Warrior-Angel soon replied:
 ‘To say and straight unsay, pretending first

918 **all Hell broke loose** Although another Puritan, John Bastwick, used a similar expression in his *Litany*, 1637, Milton was the first to say this memorably (cf. iii, 87). It was taken up popularly and degenerated, like “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark” (*Hamlet*, I, iv, 90). 928 **The** 1674 has *Thy* 945 **And** Add *with* for the meaning. The sentiment of 943-45 is similar to Prometheus’s “So worship, flatter, adore the ruler of the day; but I have no thought in my heart for Zeus.” Aeschylus, *Prometheus Bound*, 937-38.

Wise to fly pain, professing next the spy,
 Argues no leader, but a liar traced,
 Satan; and couldst thou “faithful” add? O name,°
 O sacred name of faithfulness profaned!
 Faithful to whom? to thy rebellious crew?
 Army of fiends, fit body to fit head;
 Was this your discipline and faith engaged,
 Your military obedience, to dissolve
 Allegiance to the acknowledged Power Supreme?
 And thou, sly hypocrite, who now wouldst seem
 Patron of liberty, who more than thou
 Once fawned, and cringed, and servilely adored
 Heaven’s awful Monarch? wherefore, but in hope
 To dispossess him, and thyself to reign?
 But mark what I arede° thee now: Avaunt!
 Fly thither whence thou fledd’st. If from this hour
 Within these hallowed limits thou appear,
 Back to the Infernal Pit I drag thee chained,
 And seal thee so as henceforth not to scorn°
 The facile gates of Hell too slightly barred.’

So threatened he; but Satan to no threats
 Gave heed, but waxing more in rage, replied:
 ‘Then when I am thy captive talk of chains,
 Proud limitary° Cherub, but ere then
 Far heavier load thyself expect to feel
 From my prevailing arm, though Heaven’s King°
 Ride on thy wings, and thou with thy compeers,
 Used to the yoke, draw’st his triumphant wheels
 In progress through the road of Heaven star-paved.’

While thus he spake, the angelic squadron bright
 Turned fiery red, sharpening in mooned horns
 Their phalanx, and began to hem him round
 With ported° spears, as thick as when a field
 Of Ceres, ripe for harvest waving, bends
 Her bearded grove of ears which way the wind
 Sways them; the careful ploughman doubting stands,

950 cf. 933 962 **arede** counsel 966 Revelation, xx, 3 971 **limitary** play on (1) guarding the limits (cf. 964) and (2) prescribing limits 973 **Heaven’s King** a favorite fixed epithet, ii, 751, 992; iv, 111 (also found in *Paradise Regained* i, 421); in other places with an intervening adjective i, 131; ii, 851; v, 220; x, 387 980 **ported** carried aslant across the breast

Lest on the threshing-floor his hopeful sheaves
 Prove chaff. On the other side, Satan, alarmed,°

Collecting all his might, dilated stood,
 Like Tenerife° or Atlas° unremoved;°
 His stature reached the sky, and on his crest
 Sat Horror plumed, nor wanted in his grasp
 What seemed both spear and shield. Now dreadful deeds°
 Might have ensued, nor only Paradise,
 In this commotion, but the starry cope°
 Of Heaven perhaps, or all the elements
 At least, had gone to wrack, disturbed and torn
 With violence of this conflict, had not soon
 The Eternal, to prevent such horrid fray,
 Hung forth in Heaven his golden scales, yet seen°
 Betwixt Astraea° and the Scorpion° sign,
 Wherein all things created first he weighed,
 The pendulous round Earth with balanced air
 In counterpoise, now ponders all events,
 Battles and realms. In these he put two weights,
 The sequel each of parting and of fight;
 The latter quick up flew, and kicked the beam,
 Which Gabriel spying thus bespake the Fiend:
 ‘Satan, I know thy strength, and thou know’st mine,
 Neither our own, but given; what folly then
 To boast what arms can do, since thine no more
 Than Heaven permits, nor mine, though doubled now

985 **alarmed** not fearful, but ready for battle 987 **Tenerife** A celebrated peak in the Canary Islands, of which John Donne wrote: “Doth not a Tenerife or higher hill/ Rise so high like a rock, that one might think/ The floating moon would shipwreck there and sink?” (*First Anniversary*, 286-88). **Atlas** the mountain in Libya, so high that it seemed “to bear up Heaven,” *Samson Agonistes*, 150 **unremoved** unremovable 990 **dreadful deeds** cf. i, 130 992 **cope** mantel or roof 997 ff. Besides literally referring to Libra the constellation, the poet combines classical precedent for the scales—they are like those in which the chief Olympian weighed issues (*Iliad* VII, 69; XXII, 209; *Aeneid* XII, 725—27)—with Biblical moral: “God hath numbered thy kingdom, and finished it. . . . Thou art weighed in the balances, and art found wanting” (Daniel, v, 26-27). Cf. 1012. 998 **Astraea** Justice, the constellation Virgo, who fled the earth at the end of the Golden Age. **Scorpion** has its symbolic value too.

To trample thee as mire.° For proof look up,
 And read thy lot in yon celestial sign,
 Where thou art weighed, and shown how light, how weak,
 If thou resist.’ The Fiend looked up, and knew
 His mounted scale aloft; nor° more, but fled
 Murmuring, and with him fled the shades of Night.°

1010 **To trample thee as mire** cf. Isaiah x, 6 1014 **nor** add said. 1015 **cf.** v, 1 ff

BOOK V

THE ARGUMENT

Morning approached, Eve relates to Adam her troublesome dream; he likes it not, yet comforts her; they come forth to their day labours; their morning hymn at the door of their bower. God, to render Man inexcusable, sends Raphael to admonish him of his obedience, of his free estate, of his enemy near at hand, who he is, and why his enemy, and whatever else may avail Adam to know. Raphael comes down to Paradise; his appearance described; his coming discerned by Adam afar off, sitting at the door of his bower; he goes out to meet him, brings him to his lodge, entertains him with the choicest fruits of Paradise, got together by Eve; their discourse at table. Raphael performs his message, minds Adam of his state and of his enemy; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and enemy; relates, at Adam's request, who that enemy is, and how he came to be so, beginning from his first revolt in Heaven, and the occasion thereof; how he drew his legions after him to the parts of the North, and there incited them to rebel with him, persuading all but only Abdiel, a seraph, who in argument dissuades and opposes him, then forsakes him.

Now Morn, her rosy steps in the eastern clime
Advancing, sowed the earth with orient pearl,^o
When Adam waked, so custom'd, for his sleep
Was aery light, from pure digestion bred,
And temperate vapours bland, which^o the only^o sound
Of leaves and fuming^o rills, Aurora's fan,

1-2 Compare the embellishment of another poet: "But look, the morn in russet mantle clad,/ Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill." *Hamlet*, I, i, 166-67. Cf. "Lycidas," 187. 2 **orient pearl** dewdrops; cf. iv, 238 5 **which** i.e., sleep **only** sole 6 **fuming** referring to the early-morning mist or steam, as *Aurora's fan* is the leaves in the breeze

Lightly dispersed, and the shrill matin song
Of birds on every bough. So much the more
His wonder was to find unawaken'd Eve,
With tresses discomposed, and glowing cheek,^o
As through unquiet rest. He, on his side
Leaning half raised, with looks of cordial^o love
Hung over her enamoured, and beheld
Beauty which, whether waking or asleep,
Shot forth peculiar^o graces; then, with voice
Mild as when Zephyrus on Flora breathes,
Her hand soft touching, whispered thus: 'Awake,^o
My fairest, my espoused, my latest found,
Heaven's last, best gift, my ever-new delight,
Awake, the morning shines, and the fresh field
Calls us; we lose the prime, to mark how spring
Our tended plants, how blows^o the citron grove,
What drops the myrrh, and what the balmy reed,
How Nature paints her colours, how the bee
Sits on the bloom extracting liquid sweet.'

Such whispering waked her, but with startled eye
On Adam, whom embracing, thus she spake:
'O sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,
My glory, my perfection, glad I see
Thy face, and morn returned; for I this night
(Such night till this I never passed) have dreamed,
If dreamed, not, as I oft am wont, of thee,
Works of day past, or morrow's next design,
But of offence and trouble, which my mind

Knew never till this irksome night. Methought
 Close at mine ear one called me forth to walk
 With gentle voice; I thought it thine: it said,
 “Why sleep’st thou,° Eve? now is the pleasant time,
 The cool, the silent, save where silence yields

10 **glowing cheek** a bad sign; cf. 384-85; ix, 887 12 **cordial** Milton never forgets the derivation from cor, heart. 15 **peculiar** unique; cf. the theological use of the phrase, iii, 183 17-25 An aubade or morning serenade, with parallels in Milton’s earlier Latin, in Herrick’s “Corinna’s Going A-Maying” (“Get up, get up, for shame, the blooming morn . . .”), in the Song of Songs (ii, 10), “My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.” 22 **blows** blooms 38 **Why sleep’st thou** cf. 673

To the night-warbling bird, that now awake°
 Tunes sweetest his love-laboured song; now reigns
 Full-orbed the moon, and, with more pleasing light,
 Shadowy sets off the face of things—in vain,
 If none regard; Heaven wakes with all his eyes;
 Whom to behold but thee, Nature’s desire,°
 In whose sight all things joy, with ravishment
 Attracted by thy beauty still to gaze?”
 I rose as at thy call, but found thee not:
 To find thee I directed then my walk,
 And on, methought, alone I passed through ways
 That brought me on a sudden to the tree
 Of interdicted Knowledge. Fair it seemed,
 Much fairer to my fancy than by day,
 And, as I wondering looked, beside it stood
 One shaped and winged like one of those from Heaven
 By us oft seen: his dewy locks distilled
 Ambrosia. On that tree he also gazed,
 And, “O fair plant,” said he, “with fruit surcharged,
 Deigns none to ease thy load, and taste thy sweet,
 Nor God, nor Man? Is knowledge so despised?°
 Or envy, or what reserve forbids to taste?
 Forbid who will, none shall from me withhold
 Longer thy offered good, why else set here?”
 This said, he paused not, but with venturous arm
 He plucked, he tasted. Me damp horror chilled
 At such bold words° vouched° with a deed so bold;
 But he° thus, overjoyed: “O fruit divine,
 Sweet of thyself, but much more sweet thus cropped,
 Forbidden here, it seems, as only fit
 For gods, yet able to make gods of men!
 And why not gods of men, since good, the more
 Communicated, more abundant grows,
 The author not impaired, but honoured more?
 Here, happy creature, fair angelic Eve,
 Partake thou also: happy though thou art,

40 cf. Sonnet 1: “O Nightingale that on yon bloomy spray/ Warbl’st at eve . . .” 45 Nature’s desire nature’s object of desire. As Book IX tragically shows, it will be the flatterer versus the true lover. 60 ff. Looking back to iv, 515 ff. and ahead to ix, 727 ff. 66 **bold words** cf. i, 82 **vouched** reinforced 67 **he** supply *spoke*

Happier thou may’st be, worthier canst not be.
 Taste this, and be henceforth among the gods
 Thyself a goddess; not to Earth confined,
 But sometimes in the Air, as we; sometimes
 Ascend to Heaven, by merit thine, and see
 What life the gods live there, and such live thou.”

So saying, he drew nigh, and to me held,
 Even to my mouth, of that same fruit held part
 Which he had plucked: the pleasant savoury smell
 So quickened appetite that I, methought,
 Could not but taste. Forthwith up to the clouds
 With him I flew, and underneath beheld
 The Earth outstretched immense, a prospect wide
 And various; wondering^o at my flight and change
 To this high exaltation, suddenly
 My guide was gone, and I, methought, sunk down,
 And fell asleep, but oh, how glad I waked
 To find this but a dream!' Thus Eve her night
 Related, and thus Adam answered sad:^o

'Best image of myself, and dearer half,
 The trouble of thy thoughts this night in sleep
 Affects me equally; nor can I like
 This uncouth dream, of evil sprung, I fear;
 Yet evil whence? in thee can harbour none,
 Created pure. But know that in the soul
 Are many lesser faculties, that serve
 Reason as chief. Among these Fancy next
 Her office holds; of all external things,
 Which the five watchful senses represent,
 She forms imaginations, aery shapes,
 Which Reason, joining or disjoining, frames
 All what we affirm or what deny, and call
 Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
 Into her private cell when Nature rests.
 Oft, in her absence, mimic Fancy wakes
 To imitate her, but, misjoining shapes,
 Wild work produces oft, and most in dreams,
 Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
 Some such resemblances, methinks, I find

89 **wondering** a somewhat dangling participle going with I, 91 94 **sad** in all seriousness

Of our last evening's talk^o in this thy dream,
 But with addition strange. Yet be not sad:
 Evil into the mind of God^o or Man
 May come and go, so unapproved, and leave
 No spot or blame behind; which gives me hope
 That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream
 Waking thou never wilt consent to do.
 Be not disheartened, then, nor cloud those looks,
 That wont to be more cheerful and serene
 Than when fair Morning first smiles on the world;
 And let us to our fresh employments rise
 Among the groves, the fountains, and the flowers,
 That open now their choicest blossomed smells
 Reserved from night, and kept for thee in store.'

So cheered he his fair spouse,^o and she was cheered,
 But silently a gentle tear let fall
 From either eye, and wiped them with her hair;
 Two other precious drops that ready stood,
 Each in their crystal sluice, he, ere they fell,
 Kissed as the gracious signs of sweet remorse
 And pious awe, that feared to have offended.

So all was cleared, and to the field they haste.
 But first, from under shady arborous roof
 Soon as they forth were come to open sight
 Of day-spring,^o and the Sun, who, scarce uprisen,

With wheels yet hovering o'er the ocean brim,
 Shot parallel to the Earth his dewy ray,
 Discovering in wide landscape all the east
 Of Paradise and Eden's happy plains,
 Lowly they bowed, adoring, and began
 Their orisons, each morning duly paid
 In various style; for neither various style
 Nor holy rapture wanted they to praise
 Their Maker, in fit strains pronounced, or sung
 Unmeditated;° such prompt eloquence
 Flowed from their lips, in prose or numerous verse,

115 **our last evening's talk** cf. iv, 420 ff 117 **God** may mean angel, as in other places (see note to iii, 341), and if it does not the statement is not so unorthodox as Saurat in his Milton: *Man and Thinker* thought. See Titus, i, 15. 129 **his fair spouse** as in iv, 742 139 **day-spring** the dawning 149 **Unmeditated** cf. iv, 736-37 and note

More tuneable than needed lute or harp
 To add more sweetness: and they thus began:
 'These are thy glorious works, Parent of good,°
 Almighty, thine this universal frame,
 Thus wondrous fair; thyself how wondrous then!
 Unspeakable, who sitt'st above these heavens
 To us invisible, or dimly seen
 In these thy lowest works, yet these declare
 Thy goodness beyond thought, and power divine.
 Speak, ye who best can tell, ye sons of Light,
 Angels, for ye behold him, and with songs
 And choral symphonies, day without night,°
 Circle his throne rejoicing, ye in Heaven,
 On Earth join, all ye creatures, to extol
 Him first, him last, him midst, and without end.°
 Fairest of Stars,° last in the train of Night,
 If better thou belong not to the Dawn,
 Sure pledge of day, that crown'st the smiling morn
 With thy bright circlet, praise him in thy sphere
 While day arises, that sweet hour of prime.
 Thou Sun, of this great World both eye and soul,°
 Acknowledge him thy greater; sound his praise
 In thy eternal course, both when thou climb'st
 And when high noon has gained, and when thou fall'st.
 Moon, that now meet'st the orient Sun, now fliest,
 With the fixed Stars, fixed in their orb that flies;
 And ye five other wandering Fires, that move
 In mystic dance, not without song,° resound
 His praise who out of Darkness called up Light.
 Air, and ye Elements, the eldest birth
 Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion° run

153-205 This Benedicite is to be compared with Psalm cxlviii. 162 **day without night** "for there shall be no night there" (Rev. xxi, 25) 165 "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, and the first and the last" (Rev. xxii, 13). 166 **Fairest of Stars** Venus (the superlative is from *Iliad* XXII, 318), both Morning Star (Phosphorus, Lucifer) and Evening Star (Hesperus, Vesper) 171 **of this great World both eye and soul** The former designation is from Ovid, the latter from Pliny. 178 **song** the music of the spheres, audible to Man only before the fall. 181 **quaternion** combination of the four elements

Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix
 And nourish all things, let your ceaseless change
 Vary to our great Maker still new praise.
 Ye Mists and Exhalations, that now rise

From hill or steaming lake, dusky or grey,
 Till the sun paint your fleecy skirts with gold,
 In honour to the World's great Author rise,
 Whether to deck with clouds the uncoloured° sky,
 Or wet the thirsty earth with falling showers,
 Rising or falling, still advance his praise.
 His praise, ye Winds, that from four quarters blow,
 Breathe soft or loud, and wave your tops, ye Pines,
 With every Plant, in sign of worship wave.
 Fountains, and ye that warble as ye flow°
 Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise.
 Join voices, all ye living Souls; ye Birds,
 That, singing, up to Heaven-gate ascend,°
 Bear on your wings and in your notes his praise.
 Ye that in waters glide, and ye that walk
 The earth, and stately tread, or lowly creep,
 Witness if I be silent, morn or even,
 To hill or valley, fountain, or fresh shade,
 Made vocal by my song, and taught his praise.
 Hail, universal Lord, be bounteous still
 To give us only good, and, if the night
 Have gathered aught of evil, or concealed,
 Disperse it, as now light dispels the dark.'

So prayed they innocent, and to their thoughts
 Firm peace recovered soon, and wonted calm.
 On to their morning's rural work they haste,
 Among sweet dews and flowers,° where any row
 Of fruit-trees, overwoody, reached too far
 Their pampered boughs, and needed hands to check
 Fruitless embraces: or they led the vine
 To wed her elm; she, spoused, about him twines
 Her marriageable arms, and with her brings

189 **uncoloured** unvariegated, having only one color 195 **that warble as ye flow** cf.
 iii, 31 198 Reminiscent of Shakespeare's "Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate
 sings" (*Cymbeline*, II, iii, 21) and "Like to the lark at break of day arising/ From
 sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate" (Sonnet 29). 212 **Among . . . dews and
 flowers** cf. i. 771

Her dower, the adopted clusters, to adorn
 His barren leaves. Them thus employed beheld
 With pity Heaven's high King, and to him called
 Raphael,° the sociable Spirit, that deigned
 To travel with Tobias, and secured
 His marriage with seven-times-wedded maid.°
 'Raphael,' said he, 'thou hear'st what stir on Earth
 Satan, from Hell 'scaped through the darksome gulf,
 Hath raised in Paradise, and how disturbed
 This night the human pair; how he designs
 In them at once to ruin all mankind.
 Go, therefore; half this day, as friend with friend°
 Converse with Adam, in what bower or shade
 Thou find'st him from the heat of noon retired
 To respite his day-labour with repast
 Or with repose; and such discourse bring on
 As may advise him of his happy state—
 Happiness in his power left free to will,
 Left to his own free will, his will though free
 Yet mutable. Whence warn him to beware
 He swerve not, too secure; tell him withal
 His danger, and from whom, what enemy,
 Late fallen himself from Heaven, is plotting now

The fall of others from like state of bliss.
 By violence? no, for that shall be withstood;
 But by deceit and lies. This let him know,
 Lest, wilfully transgressing, he pretend
 Surprisal, unadmonished, unforewarned.'

So spake the Eternal Father, and fulfilled
 All justice. Nor delayed the winged Saint
 After his charge received, but from among
 Thousand celestial Ardours^o where he stood
 Veiled with his gorgeous wings upspringing light
 Flew through the midst of Heaven. The angelic choirs,
 On each hand parting, to his speed gave way
 Through all the empyreal road, till, at the gate
 Of Heaven arrived, the gate self-opened wide,

221 **Raphael** "Divine healer" 222-23 see iv, 168 ff. 229 "And the Lord spake unto
 Moses face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend" (Ex. xxxiii, 11). 249 **Ardours**
 a translation of Hebrew *Seraphim*, which is from a verb meaning to *burn*

On golden hinges turning, as by work
 Divine the sovran Architect had framed.

From hence no cloud, or, to obstruct his sight,
 Star interposed, however small, he sees,
 Not unconform to other shining globes,
 Earth, and the Garden of God, with cedars crowned
 Above all hills. As when by night the glass
 Of Galileo, less assured, observes
 Imagined lands and regions in the Moon,
 Or pilot from amidst the Cyclades
 Delos or Samos first appearing kens,
 A cloudy spot. Down thither prone in flight
 He speeds, and through the vast ethereal sky^o
 Sails between worlds and worlds, with steady wing
 Now on the polar winds; then with quick fan
 Winnows the buxom air,^o till, within soar
 Of towering eagles, to all the fowls he seems
 A phoenix,^o gazed by all, as that sole bird,
 When, to enshrine his relics in the Sun's
 Bright temple, to Egyptian Thebes he flies.
 At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise
 He lights and to his proper shape^o returns,
 A Seraph winged. Six wings^o he wore, to shade
 His lineaments^o divine: the pair that clad
 Each shoulder broad came mantling^o o'er his breast
 With regal ornament; the middle pair
 Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
 Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
 And colours dipped in Heaven; the third his feet
 Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail,
 Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son^o he stood,
 And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled
 The circuit wide. Straight knew him all the bands
 Of Angels under watch, and to his state^o
 And to his message high in honour rise,

267 the . . . ethereal sky cf. i, 45 270 the buxom air as at ii, 842 272 phoenix the
 "self-begotten bird" of *Samson Agonistes*, 1699 276 his proper shape cf. iii, 634
 277 Six wings as in Isaiah, vi, 2 278 lineaments body's lines, as at vii, 477 279
 mantling using the wings like a mantle, by raising them so that they meet (compare
 the swan at vii, 439) 285 Maia's son Hermes or Mercury 288 state stateliness

For on some message high they guessed him bound.

Their glittering tents he passed, and now is come
 Into the blissful field, through groves of myrrh,
 And flowering odours, cassia, nard, and balm,
 A wilderness of sweets, for Nature here
 Wantoned as in her prime, and played at will
 Her virgin fancies, pouring forth more sweet,
 Wild above rule or art,^o enormous bliss.
 Him, through the spicy forest onward come,
 Adam discerned, as in the door he sat^o
 Of his cool bower, while now the mounted Sun
 Shot down direct his fervid rays, to warm
 Earth's inmost womb, more warmth than Adam needs;^o
 And Eve, within, due^o at her hour, prepared
 For dinner savoury fruits, of taste to please
 True appetite, and not disrelish thirst
 Of nectarous draughts between, from milky stream,
 Berry or grape: to whom thus Adam called:

'Haste hither, Eve, and, worth thy sight, behold
 Eastward among those trees what glorious Shape
 Comes this way moving; seems another morn
 Risen on mid-noon. Some great behest from Heaven
 To us perhaps he brings, and will vouchsafe
 This day to be our guest. But go with speed,
 And what thy stores contain bring forth, and pour
 Abundance, fit to honour and receive
 Our heavenly stranger; well we may afford
 Our givers their own gifts, and large bestow
 From large bestowed, where Nature multiplies
 Her fertile growth, and by disburdening grows
 More fruitful; which instructs us not to spare.'

To whom thus Eve: 'Adam,^o Earth's hallowed mould,
 Of God inspired, small store will serve where store,
 All seasons, ripe for use hangs on the stalk;
 Save what, by frugal storing, firmness gains
 To nourish, and superfluous moist consumes.

297 1667 has a semicolon instead of a comma, making *pouring* (296) intransitive
 and *enormous bliss* appositional. 299 "And the Lord appeared unto him [Abraham]
 in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day" (Gen. xviii,
 1). 301-302 cf. iii, 583-86 303 **due** an adverb 321 **Adam** means *earth*

But I will haste, and from each bough and brake,
 Each plant and juiciest gourd, will pluck such choice
 To entertain our Angel-guest as he,
 Beholding, shall confess that here on Earth
 God hath dispensed his bounties as in Heaven.'

So saying, with dispatchful looks in haste
 She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
 What choice to choose for delicacy best,^o
 What order so contrived as not to mix
 Tastes, not well joined, inelegant, but bring
 Taste after taste upheld with kindest change.
 Bestirs her then, and from each tender stalk
 Whatever Earth, all-bearing mother, yields
 In India East or West, or middle shore^o
 In Pontus or the Punic coast, or where
 Alcinous^o reigned, fruit of all kinds, in coat
 Rough or smooth rind,^o or bearded husk, or shell,
 She gathers, tribute large, and on the board
 Heaps with unsparing hand. For drink the grape
 She crushes, inoffensive must,^o and meaths^o
 From many a berry, and from sweet kernels pressed

She tempers dulcet creams, nor these to hold
Wants her fit vessels pure; then strews the ground
With rose and odours from the shrub unfumed.^o

Meanwhile our primitive great Sire, to meet
His godlike guest walks forth, without more train
Accompanied than with his own complete

333 ff. This was not an indifferent subject to the poet, as is further illustrated by his remark to his third wife: "God have mercy, Betty, I see thou wilt perform according to thy promise in providing me such dishes as I think fit whilst I live; and, when I die, thou knowest that I have left thee all"; cf. ix, 232-33. 339 **middle shore** an etymological reference to the lands bordering the Mediterranean, as *Pontus* (340) is the Black Sea (*Pontus Euxinus*) or its southern shore, and *Punic coast* is probably guided by the thought of African figs 341 **Alcinous** the happy ruler of the Phaeacians, who entertained Odysseus. Homer describes his gardens about the palace as paradisial. 342 *rin'd* in the earliest editions a participle, *rin'd* 345 **inoffensive must** unintoxicating grape juice **meaths** a honey drink 349 **unfumed** unburned (not in the form of incense but from the fresh plant)

Perfections; in himself was all his state,
More solemn than the tedious pomp that waits
On princes, when their rich retinue long
Of horses led and grooms besmeared with gold
Dazzles the crowd and sets them all agape.
Nearer his presence, Adam, though not awed,
Yet with submiss approach and reverence meek,
As to a superior nature, bowing low,^o
Thus said: 'Native of Heaven, for other place
None can than Heaven such glorious shape^o contain,
Since, by descending from the thrones above,
Those happy places thou hast deigned a while
To want,^o and honour these, vouchsafe with us,
Two only, who^o yet by sovran gift possess
This spacious ground, in yonder shady bower
To rest, and what the garden choicest bears
To sit and taste, till this meridian^o heat
Be over, and the sun more cool decline.'

Whom thus the angelic Virtue answered mild:
'Adam, I therefore came; nor art thou such
Created, or such place hast here to dwell,
As may not oft invite, though Spirits of Heaven,
To visit thee. Lead on, then, where thy bower
O'er shades, for these mid-hours, till evening rise,
I have at will.' So to the sylvan lodge
They came, that like Pomona's^o harbour smiled
With flowerets decked and fragrant smells. But Eve,
Undecked, save with herself, more lovely fair
Than wood-nymph, or the fairest goddess^o feigned
Of three that in Mount Ida naked strove,
Stood to entertain her guest from Heaven; no veil
She needed, virtue-proof; no thought infirm
Altered her cheek. On whom the Angel 'Hail!'

360 **bowing low** cf. iii, 736 (also i, 434) 362 **glorious shape** cf. 309 365 **To want** to be without 366 **only, who** by elision the three syllables become two, as No *ingrateful food* (407) is *N'ingrateful food* 369 **meridian** noonday 378 **Pomona** the Roman goddess of flowers and fruits 381-82 Aphrodite won from Paris the award "to the fairest" over Hera and Pallas Athene in the celebrated beauty contest held before the shepherd in Mysia, Asia Minor. That was strife over a mischievous apple too and led directly to the Trojan War.

Bestowed, the holy salutation used

Long after to blest Mary, second Eve:
 'Hail! Mother of mankind, whose fruitful womb°
 Shall fill the world more numerous with thy sons
 Than with these various fruits the trees of God
 Have heaped this table!' Raised of grassy turf
 Their table was, and mossy seats had round,
 And on her° ample square, from side to side,
 All Autumn piled, though Spring and Autumn here
 Danced hand in hand. A while discourse they hold,
 No fear lest dinner cool;° when thus began
 Our Author: 'Heavenly stranger,° please to taste
 These bounties, which our Nourisher, from whom
 All perfect good, unmeasured out, descends,°
 To us for food and for delight hath caused
 The Earth to yield: unsavoury food, perhaps,
 To spiritual natures; only this I know,
 That one Celestial Father gives to all.'

To whom the Angel: 'Therefore, what he gives
 (Whose praise be ever sung) to Man, in part
 Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found
 No ingrateful food—and food alike those pure°
 Intelligential substances require
 As doth your rational, and both contain
 Within them every lower faculty
 Of sense, whereby they hear, see, smell, touch, taste,

388 ff. The garden is overabundant in preparation for this posterity. 393 **her** its 396
No fear lest dinner cool "A terrible bathos after the beautiful imagery, but shows
 Milton's simplicity" (Tennyson)—and illuminates the question of his sense of
 humor. 397 **Heavenly stranger** as at 316 399 "Every good gift and every perfect gift
 is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights" (James, i, 17). 407 ff.
 Regardless of how uncomfortable the angelic digestion (and further on the angelic
 bodily love and armored war) makes the modern reader, Milton is metaphysically a
 materialist—he believes in the goodness and unity of matter ("one first matter all,"
 472), and he insists on a solid presentment of beings that look as if they differ from
 unfallen man in degree rather than in kind (490). There is "angels' food" in Psalm
 lxxviii, 25 and in this book of *Paradise Lost*, 633. Spirit and matter are connected,
 469 ff. This view fits well with the poet's necessity of making the abstract concrete
 (571 ff.)

Tasting concoct,° digest,° assimilate,
 And corporeal to incorporeal turn.
 For know, whatever was created needs
 To be sustained and fed. Of elements
 The grosser feeds the purer: Earth the Sea;
 Earth and the Sea feed Air; the Air those Fires
 Ethereal, and, as lowest, first the Moon,
 Whence in her visage round those spots, unpurged
 Vapours not yet into her substance turned.
 Nor doth the Moon no nourishment exhale
 From her moist continent to higher orbs.
 The Sun, that light imparts to all, receives
 From all his alimential recompense
 In humid exhalations, and at even
 Sups with the Ocean; though in Heaven the trees
 Of life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
 Yield nectar, though from off the boughs each morn
 We brush mellifluous dews, and find the ground
 Covered with pearly grain, yet God hath here
 Varied his bounty so with new delights°
 As may compare with Heaven; and to taste
 Think not I shall be nice.' So down they sat,

And to their viands fell; nor seemingly
 The Angel, nor in mist (the common gloss
 Of theologians) but with keen dispatch
 Of real hunger and concoctive heat
 To transubstantiate: what redounds transpires
 Through Spirits with ease, nor wonder, if by fire
 Of sooty coal the empiric alchemist^o
 Can turn, or holds it possible to turn,
 Metals of drossiest ore to perfect gold,
 As from the mine. Meanwhile at table Eve
 Ministered naked, and their flowing cups
 With pleasant liquors crowned: O innocence
 Deserving Paradise! If ever, then,
 Then had the Sons of God excuse to have been
 Enamoured at that sight. But in those hearts
 Love unlibidinous reigned, nor jealousy^o
 Was understood, the injured lover's hell.

412 **concoct, digest** synonyms 431 **new delights** cf. 19 440 ff. cf. iii, 600 ff 449 **nor jealousy** It comes with ix, 827-30.

Thus when with meats and drinks they had sufficed,
 Not burdened, nature, sudden mind arose
 In Adam not to let the occasion pass,
 Given him by this great conference, to know
 Of things above his world, and of their being
 Who dwell in Heaven, whose excellence he saw
 Transcend his own so far, whose radiant forms,
 Divine effulgence, whose high power so far
 Exceeded human, and his wary speech
 Thus to the empyreal minister he framed:
 'Inhabitant with God, now know I well
 Thy favour in this honour done to Man,
 Under whose lowly roof thou hast vouchsafed
 To enter, and these earthly fruits to taste,
 Food not of Angels, yet accepted so
 As that more willingly thou couldst not seem
 At Heaven's high feasts to have fed, yet what compare!'

To whom the winged Hierarch replied:
 'O Adam, one Almighty is, from whom
 All things proceed, and up to him return,
 If not depraved from good, created all
 Such to perfection; one first matter all,
 Endued with various forms,^o various degrees
 Of substance, and, in things that live, of life,
 But more refined, more spirituous and pure,
 As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
 Each in their several active spheres assigned,
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
 Proportioned to each kind. So from the root
 Springs lighter the green stalk, from thence the leaves
 More aery, last the bright consummate flower
 Spirits odorous breathes: flowers and their fruit,
 Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed,
 To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
 To intellectual, give both life and sense,
 Fancy and understanding, whence the Soul
 Reason receives, and Reason is her being,
 Discursive, or intuitive: discourse
 Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,
 Differing but in degree, of kind the same.

473 **various forms** cf. iii, 717

Wonder not, then, what God for you saw good
 If I refuse not, but convert, as you,
 To proper^o substance. Time may come when Men
 With Angels may participate, and find
 No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare,
 And from these corporal nutriments, perhaps,
 Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit,
 Improved by tract of time, and winged ascend
 Ethereal, as we, or may at choice
 Here or in heavenly paradises dwell,
 If ye be found obedient, and retain
 Unalterably firm his love entire
 Whose progeny you are.^o Meanwhile enjoy
 Your fill^o what happiness this happy state
 Can comprehend, incapable of more.'

To whom the Patriarch of Mankind replied:
 'O favourable Spirit, propitious guest,
 Well hast thou taught the way that might direct
 Our knowledge, and the scale of Nature set
 From centre to circumference, whereon,
 In contemplation of created things,
 By steps we may ascend to God. But say,
 What meant that caution joined, If ye be found
 Obedient? Can we want obedience, then,
 To him, or possibly his love desert,
 Who formed us from the dust, and placed us here
 Full to the utmost measure of what bliss
 Human desires can seek or apprehend?'

To whom the Angel: 'Son of Heaven and Earth,
 Attend: That thou art happy, owe to God;
 That thou continuest such, owe to thyself,
 That is, to thy obedience; therein stand.
 This was that caution given thee; be advised.
 God made thee perfect, not immutable,
 And good he made thee, but to persevere
 He left it in thy power, ordained thy will
 By nature free, not overruled by fate
 Inextricable, or strict necessity.

493 **proper** (my) own (Latin *proprius*) 503 **Whose progeny** you are This derives
 from St. Paul, quoting Aratus (Acts, xvii, 28). 503-04 **enjoy** . . . **fill** cf. iv, 507

Our voluntary service he requires,
 Not our necessitated. Such with him
 Finds no acceptance, nor can find; for how
 Can hearts not free be tried whether they serve
 Willing or no, who will but what they must
 By destiny, and can no other choose?
 Myself, and all the Angelic Host, that stand
 In sight of God enthroned, our happy state
 Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds;
 On other surety none: freely we serve
 Because we freely love, as in our will
 To love or not; in this we stand or fall:
 And some are fallen, to disobedience fallen,
 And so from Heaven to deepest Hell.^o O fall
 From what high state of bliss^o into what woe!'

To whom our great Progenitor: 'Thy words
 Attentive and with more delighted ear.
 Divine instructor, I have heard, than when
 Cherubic songs by night from neighbouring hills
 Aerial music send. Nor knew I not

To be, both will and deed, created free.
 Yet that we never shall forget to love
 Our Maker, and obey him whose command
 Single is yet so just, my constant thoughts
 Assured me, and still assure; though what thou tell'st
 Hath passed in Heaven, some doubt within me move,
 But more desire to hear, if thou consent,
 The full relation, which must needs be strange,
 Worthy of sacred silence^o to be heard.
 And we have yet large day, for scarce the Sun
 Hath finished half his journey, and scarce begins
 His other half in the great zone of Heaven.'

Thus Adam made request; and Raphael,
 After short pause assenting, thus began:

'High matter thou enjoin'st me, O prime of Men,
 Sad task and hard, for how shall I relate
 To human sense the invisible exploits
 Of warring Spirits? how, without remorse,

542 to deepest Hell as at iii, 678 543 state of bliss cf. 241 557 Worthy of sacred
 silence Horace's *sacro digna silentio* (*Carm.* II, xiii, 29).

The ruin of so many, glorious once
 And perfect while they stood? how, last, unfold
 The secrets of another world, perhaps
 Not lawful to reveal? Yet for thy good
 This is dispensed, and what surmounts the reach
 Of human sense I shall delineate so,
 By likening spiritual to corporeal forms,
 As may express them best—though what if Earth
 Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
 Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought?

'As yet this World was not, and Chaos wild
 Reigned where these Heavens now roll, where Earth
 now rests
 Upon her centre poised, when on a day
 (For Time, though in Eternity, applied
 To motion, measures all things durable
 By present, past, and future), on such day
 As Heaven's great year brings forth, the empyreal host
 Of Angels, by imperial summons called,
 Innumerable before the Almighty's throne
 Forthwith from all the ends of Heaven appeared
 Under their hierarchs in orders bright.^o
 Ten thousand thousand ensigns high advanced,^o
 Standards and gonfalons,^o 'twixt van and rear,
 Stream in the air, and for distinction serve
 Of hierarchies, of orders, and degrees,
 Or in their glittering tissues bear emblazed
 Holy memorials, acts of zeal and love
 Recorded eminent. Thus when in orbs
 Of circuit inexpressible they stood,
 Orb within orb, the Father Infinite,
 By whom in bliss embosomed sat the Son,
 Amidst as from a flaming mount, whose top
 Brightness had made invisible, thus spake:^o
 'Hear, all ye Angels, Progeny of Light,^o
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,^o

587 orders bright cf. i, 737 588 high advanced cf. iv, 90, 359 589 gonfalons
 banners usually of two or three streamers 599 cf. iii, 380 600 Light God (iii, 3) 601
 This grand nominative of address, employed twice more in the fifth book, 772, 840,

and again in the tenth, 460, refers to different ranks in the celestial hierarchy.

Hear my decree, which unrevoked shall stand.
This day I have begot^o whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy hill
Him have anointed,^o whom ye now behold
At my right hand. Your head I him appoint,
And by myself have sworn to him shall bow
All knees in Heaven, and shall confess him Lord:
Under his great vicegerent reign abide,
United as one individual soul,
Forever happy; him who disobeys,
Me disobeys, breaks union, and, that day,
Cast out from God and blessed vision, falls
Into utter darkness,^o deep engulfed, his place
Ordained without redemption, without end.”^o

‘So spake the Omnipotent, and with his words
All seemed well pleased; all seemed, but were not all.
That day, as other solemn days, they spent
In song and dance about the sacred hill—
Mystical dance,^o which yonder starry sphere
Of planets and of fixed in all her wheels
Resembles nearest; mazes intricate,
Eccentric, intervolved, yet regular
Then most when most irregular they seem,
And in their motions harmony divine
So smooths her charming tones that God’s own ear
Listens delighted. Evening now approached
(For we have also our evening and our morn,
We ours for change delectable, not need),
Forthwith from dance to sweet repast they turn
Desirous; all in circles as they stood,
Tables are set, and on a sudden piled

603 **begot** used metaphorically to denote not the production or creation of the Son, but his exaltation, as explained in *Christian Doctrine* (I, 5): “it will be apparent from the second Psalm that God has begotten the Son, that is, has made him a king.” Cf. 663, and for the prior existence of the son, 835 ff.; iii, 390-91. 605 **anointed** which is what *Messiah* means (664) 614 **utter darkness** prophetic and a pun, since *utter*, besides meaning *outer* (as in the same phrase at i, 72), also has its modern coloration 615 **without end** a standard phrase, both for damnation and for salvation (i, 67; ii, 870; iii, 142; v, 165; vi, 137; vii, 161, 542; x, 797) 620 **Mystical dance** cf. 178

With Angels’ food, and rubied nectar flows:
In pearl, in diamond, and massy gold,
Fruit of delicious vines, the growth of Heaven.
On flowers reposed, and with fresh flowerets crowned,^o
They eat, they drink, and in communion sweet^o
Quaff immortality and joy, secure
Of surfeit where full measure only bounds
Excess, before the all-bounteous King, who showered
With copious hand, rejoicing in their joy.
Now when ambrosial Night,^o with clouds exhaled
From that high mount of God whence light and shade
Spring both, the face of brightest Heaven had changed
To grateful twilight (for Night comes not there
In darker veil), and roseate dews disposed
All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest,
Wide over all the plain, and wider far
Than all this globous Earth in plain outspread
(Such are the courts of God), the Angelic throng,

Dispersed in bands and files, their camp extend
 By living streams among the trees of life—
 Pavilions numberless and sudden reared,
 Celestial tabernacles, where they slept,
 Fanned with cool winds, save those who, in their course,
 Melodious hymns about the sovran throne
 Alternate all night long. But not so waked
 Satan—so call him now; his former name
 Is heard no more in Heaven: he, of the first,
 If not the first Archangel, great in power,
 In favour, and pre-eminence, yet fraught
 With envy against the Son of God that day
 Honoured by his great Father and proclaimed
 Messiah, King Anointed, could not bear,
 Through pride, that sight, and thought himself impaired.
 Deep malice^o thence conceiving and disdain,
 Soon as midnight brought on the dusky hour
 Friendliest to sleep and silence, he resolved

636 This line is not in the first edition. 637 ff. 1667 reads: “They eat, they drink, and
 with reflection sweet/ Are filled, before th’ all bounteous King, who showered, etc.”

642 **ambrosial Night** a Homeric expression (*Il.* II, 57) 666 **Deep malice** cf. ii, 382;
 iv, 123

With all his legions to dislodge, and leave
 Unworshipped, unbeyed, the Throne supreme,
 Contemptuous, and, his next subordinate^o
 Awakening, thus to him in secret spake:
 “‘Sleep’st thou, companion dear? what sleep can close
 Thy eyelids? and rememberest what decree
 Of yesterday, so late hath passed the lips
 Of Heaven’s Almighty? Thou to me thy thoughts
 Wast wont, I mine to thee was wont, to impart;
 Both waking we were one; how then can now
 Thy sleep dissent? New laws thou seest imposed;
 New laws from him who reigns, new minds may raise
 In us who serve, new counsels, to debate
 What doubtful may ensue. More in this place
 To utter is not safe. Assemble thou
 Of all those myriads which we lead the chief;
 Tell them that, by command, ere yet dim Night
 Her shadowy cloud withdraws, I am to haste,
 And all who under me their banners wave,
 Homeward with flying march^o where we possess
 The quarters of the North, there to prepare
 Fit entertainment to receive our King,^o
 The great Messiah, and his new commands,
 Who speedily through all the hierarchies
 Intends to pass triumphant, and give laws.”
 ‘So spake the false^o Archangel, and infused
 Bad influence into the unwary breast
 Of his associate; he^o together calls,
 Or several one by one, the regent Powers,
 Under him regent; tells, as he was taught,
 That, the Most High commanding, now ere Night
 Now ere dim Night^o had disencumbered Heaven,
 The great hierarchal standard was to move,
 Tells the suggested cause, and casts between
 Ambiguous words and jealousies to sound
 Or taint integrity. But all obeyed
 The wonted signal and superior voice

671 **his next subordinate** presumably Beelzebub 688 **flying march** cf. ii, 574 690
 The devil's first sarcasm or "Ambiguous words" (703) 694 **So spake the false** cf. iii,
 681 696 **he** i.e., *his associate*. 700 **dim Night** cf. 685 and ii, 1036

Of their great Potentate, for great indeed
 His name and high was his degree in Heaven:
 His countenance, as the morning-star^o that guides
 The starry flock, allured them, and with lies
 Drew after him the third part of Heaven's host.^o
 Meanwhile, the Eternal Eye, whose sight discerns
 Abstrusest thoughts, from forth his holy mount,
 And from within the golden lamps that burn
 Nightly before him, saw without their light^o
 Rebellion rising, saw in whom, how spread
 Among the Sons of Morn,^o what multitudes
 Were banded to oppose his high decree,^o
 And, smiling, to his only Son thus said:

‘“Son, thou in whom my glory I behold
 In full resplendence, Heir of all my might,
 Nearly it now concerns us to be sure
 Of our omnipotence,^o and with what arms
 We mean to hold what anciently we claim
 Of deity or empire: such a foe
 Is rising who intends to erect his throne
 Equal to ours, throughout the spacious North,
 Nor, so content, hath in his thought to try
 In battle what our power is or our right.
 Let us advise, and to this hazard draw
 With speed what force is left, and all employ
 In our defence, lest unawares we lose
 This our high place, our sanctuary, our hill.”

‘To whom the Son, with calm aspect and clear
 Light'ning divine, ineffable, serene,
 Made answer: “Mighty Father, thou thy foes
 Justly hast in derision, and secure^o
 Laugh'st at their vain designs^o and tumults vain,
 Matter to me of glory, whom their hate
 Illústrates,^o when they see all regal power
 Given me to quell their pride, and in event
 Know whether I be dextrous to subdue

708 **as the morning-star** i.e., Lucifer 710 ii, 692 is identical except for the last
 word. 713-14 cf. Revelation, iv, 5 716 **Sons of Morn** cf. **Isaiah**, xiv, 12 717 **high**
decree cf. iii, 126; x, 953 721-22 God is amused; cf. 735-37 and Psalms ii, 4. 736
 Psalms lix, 8 737 **vain designs** cf. iii, 467 739 **Illústrates** makes illustrious

Thy rebels, or be found the worst in Heaven.”

‘So spake the Son; but Satan with his Powers
 Far was advanced on winged speed,^o an host
 Innumerable as the stars at night,
 Or stars of morning, dewdrops which the sun
 Impearls on every leaf and every flower.
 Regions they passed, the mighty regencies
 Of Seraphim and Potentates and Thrones
 In their triple degrees, regions to which
 All thy dominion, Adam, is no more
 Than what this garden is to all the earth
 And all the sea, from one entire globose^o
 Stretched into longitude; which having passed,
 At length into the limits of the North
 They came, and Satan to his royal seat

High on a hill, far-blazing, as a mount
 Raised on a mount, with pyramids and towers
 From diamond quarries hewn and rocks of gold,
 The palace of great Lucifer (so call
 That structure, in the dialect of men
 Interpreted) which, not long after, he,
 Affecting all equality with God,
 In imitation^o of that mount whereon
 Messiah was declared in sight of Heaven,
 The Mountain of the Congregation called;
 For thither he assembled all his train,
 Pretending so commanded to consult
 About the great reception of their King
 Thither to come, and with calumnious art
 Of counterfeited truth thus held their ears:

‘ “Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,
 If these magnificent titles yet remain
 Not merely titular, since by decree
 Another now hath to himself engrossed
 All power, and us eclipsed under the name
 Of King Anointed;^o for whom all this haste
 Of midnight march, and hurried meeting here,

744 **winged speed** cf. i, 674; iv, 788; also ii, 700 753 **globose** a noun, *sphere* 764 **In imitation** The poem continually illustrates the old view that the devil is the ape of God (*simia Dei*). 777 **King Anointed** cf. 664; 870; vi, 718; xii, 359

This only to consult, how we may best,
 With what may be devised of honours new,
 Receive him coming to receive from us
 Knee-tribute yet unpaid, prostration vile,
 Too much to one, but double how endured,
 To one and to his image now proclaimed?
 But what if better counsels might erect
 Our minds, and teach us to cast off this yoke?
 Will ye submit your necks and choose to bend
 The supple knee? ye will not, if I trust^o
 To know ye right, or if ye know yourselves
 Natives and Sons of Heaven^o possessed before
 By none, and, if not equal all, yet free,
 Equally free; for orders and degrees^o
 Jar not with liberty, but well consist.
 Who can in reason, then, or right, assume
 Monarchy over such as live by right
 His equals—if in power and splendour less,
 In freedom equal? or can introduce
 Law and edict on us, who without law
 Err not? much less for this to be our Lord,
 And look for adoration, to the abuse
 Of those imperial titles which assert
 Our being ordained to govern, not to serve!”

‘Thus far his bold discourse without control
 Had audience, when, among the Seraphim,
 Abdiel,^o than whom none with more zeal adored
 The Deity, and divine commands obeyed,
 Stood up, and in a flame of zeal severe
 The current of his fury thus opposed:

‘ “O argument blasphemous, false, and proud!
 Words which no ear ever to hear in Heaven
 Expected, least of all from thee, ingrate,
 In place thyself so high above thy peers.
 Canst thou with impious obloquy condemn

787-88 Compare the similar expression, i, 111-12. 790 **Sons of Heaven** cf. i, 654
 792 **orders and degrees** cf. 591 805 **Abdiel** "Servant of God" (vi, 29), in the Bible a
 human name only (1 Chron. v, 15). There is reason to suspect that Milton when he
 created Abdiel was thinking of himself and his own lonely and perilous defiance,
 "Among the faithless, faithful only he" (897), when his countrymen backslid; cf.
 with 876; vii, 27.

The just decree of God, pronounced and sworn,
 That to his only Son, by right endued
 With regal sceptre,^o every soul in Heaven
 Shall bend the knee, and in that honour due^o
 Confess him rightful King? Unjust, thou say'st,
 Flatly unjust, to bind with laws the free,
 And equal over equals to let reign,
 One over all with unsucceeded power.
 Shalt thou give law to God? shalt thou dispute
 With him the points of liberty who made
 Thee what thou art, and formed the Powers of Heaven
 Such as he pleased, and circumscribed their being?
 Yet, by experience taught, we know how good,
 And of our good and of our dignity
 How provident he is, how far from thought
 To make us less, bent rather to exalt
 Our happy state, under one head more near
 United. But, to grant it thee unjust
 That equal over equals monarch reign,^o
 Thyself, though great and glorious, dost thou count,
 Or all angelic nature joined in one,
 Equal to him, begotten Son, by whom,
 As by his Word, the mighty Father made
 All things, even thee, and all the Spirits of Heaven
 By him created in their bright degrees,
 Crowned them with glory, and to their glory named
 Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues, Powers,^o
 Essential Powers, nor by his reign obscured,
 But more illustrious made, since he, the head,
 One of our number thus reduced becomes,
 His laws our laws, all honour to him done
 Returns our own. Cease, then, this impious rage,
 And tempt not these; but hasten to appease
 The incensed Father and the incensed Son
 While pardon may be found, in time besought."

'So spake the fervent Angel, but his zeal
 None seconded, as out of season judged,
 Or singular and rash: whereat rejoiced
 The Apostate, and, more haughty, thus replied:

816 **regal sceptre** cf. iii, 339, 340 817 **honour due** cf. iii, 738 832 cf. 820 840 cf.
 Col. i, 16

"That we were formed, then, say'st thou? and the work^o
 Of secondary hands, by task transferred
 From Father to his Son? Strange point and new!
 Doctrine which we would know whence learnt; who saw
 When this creation was? rememberest thou
 Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?^o
 We know no time when we were not as now,
 Know none before us, self-begot, self-raised
 By our own quickening power when fatal course
 Had circled his full orb, the birth mature
 Of this our native Heaven, Ethereal Sons.
 Our puissance is our own; our own right hand
 Shall teach us highest deeds, by proof to try^o

Who is our equal: then thou shalt behold
 Whether by supplication we intend
 Address, and to begirt the Almighty Throne
 Beseeching or besieging.^o This report,
 These tidings, carry to the anointed King,
 And fly, ere evil intercept thy flight.”
 ‘He said, and, as the sound of waters, deep,^o
 Hoarse murmur echoed to his words applause
 Through the infinite host, nor less for that
 The flaming Seraph, fearless, though alone,
 Encompassed round with foes, thus answered bold:
 ‘“O alienate from God, O Spirit accursed,
 Forsaken of all good! I see thy fall
 Determined, and thy hapless crew involved
 In this perfidious fraud, contagion spread^o
 Both of thy crime and punishment; henceforth
 No more be troubled how to quit the yoke
 Of God’s Messiah: those indulgent laws
 Will not now be vouchsafed; other decrees

853 ff. Beatrice explained that the unfallen angels “were modest to acknowledge themselves derived from that same Excellence which made them swift to so great understanding.” *Paradiso*, xxix, 58—60. 857-58 A silly argument, since, as Adam says, “for who himself beginning knew?” (viii, 251). Cf. Job, xxxviii, 4. The Apostate is already weaker in his faculties (from overweening pride), but his audience corresponds. 864-65 “Thy right hand shall teach thee terrible things” (Ps. xlv, 4). 869 **Beseeching or besieging** contemptuous wordplay 872 cf. Revelation, xix, 6 880 **contagion spread** cf. “Lycidas,” 127

Against thee are gone forth without recall;
 That golden sceptre which thou didst reject
 Is now an iron rod to bruise and break^o
 Thy disobedience. Well thou didst advise,
 Yet not for thy advice or threats I fly
 These wicked tents devoted, lest the wrath
 Impendent, raging into sudden flame,
 Distinguish not, for soon expect to feel^o
 His thunder on thy head, devouring fire.
 Then who created thee lamenting learn
 When who can uncreate thee thou shalt know.”
 ‘So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found,
 Among the faithless, faithful only he;
 Among innumerable false unmoved,
 Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified,
 His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal,
 Nor number nor example with him wrought
 To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind,
 Though single. From amidst them forth he passed,
 Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustained
 Superior, nor of violence feared aught;
 And with retorted^o scorn his back he turned
 On those proud towers, to swift destruction^o doomed.’

886-87 cf. ii, 327-28 and “Lycidas,” 111. 892 **expect to feel** cf. iv, 972 906 **retorted** literally, *turned back* 907 **swift destruction** a phrase from 2 Peter, ii, 1

BOOK VI

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael continues to relate how Michael and Gabriel were sent forth to battle against Satan and his angels. The first fight described: Satan and his Powers retire under night. He calls a council; invents devilish engines, which, in the second day's fight, put Michael and his Angels to some disorder; but they at length, pulling up mountains, overwhelmed both the force and machines of Satan. Yet, the tumult not so ending, God, on the third day, sends Messiah his Son, for whom he had reserved the glory of that victory. He, in the power of his Father, coming to the place, and causing all his legions to stand still on either side, with his chariot and thunder driving into the midst of his enemies, pursues them, unable to resist, towards the wall of Heaven, which opening, they leap down with horror and confusion into the place of punishment prepared for them in the Deep. Messiah returns with triumph to his Father.

‘ALL night the dreadless Angel, unpursued,
Through Heaven’s wide champaign° held his way, till
Morn,
Waked by the circling Hours, with rosy hand°
Unbarred the gates of Light. There is a cave
Within the Mount of God, fast by his throne,
Where Light and Darkness in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through
Heaven
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night;
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious° Darkness enters, till her hour
To veil the heaven, though darkness there might well
Seem twilight here. And now went forth the Morn

2 **champaign** plains (cf. 15) 3 **with rosy hand** suggested by Homer’s “rosy-fingered Dawn” 10 **Obsequious** obedient, as at 783

Such as in highest heaven, arrayed in gold
Empyreal; from before her vanished Night,
Shot through with orient beams,° when all the plain
Covered with thick embattled squadrons bright,
Chariots, and flaming arms, and fiery steeds,
Reflecting blaze on blaze, first met his view.
War he perceived, war in procinct,° and found
Already known what he for news had thought
To have reported. Gladly then he mixed
Among those friendly Powers, who him received
With joy and acclamations loud, that one,
That of so many myriads fallen, yet one
Returned not lost. On to the sacred hill°
They led him, high applauded, and present
Before the seat supreme; from whence a voice,
From midst a golden cloud, thus mild was heard:
‘“Servant of God, well done! Well hast thou fought
The better fight, who single hast maintained°
Against revolted multitudes the cause
Of truth, in word mightier than they in arms,°
And for the testimony of truth hast borne
Universal reproach, far worse to bear
Than violence; for this was all thy care—
To stand approved in sight of God, though worlds
Judged thee perverse. The easier conquest now

Remains thee, aided by this host of friends,
 Back on thy foes more glorious to return
 Than scorned thou didst depart, and to subdue
 By force who reason for their law refuse,
 Right reason for their law, and for their King
 Messiah, who by right of merit reigns.
 Go, Michael, of celestial armies prince,
 And thou, in military prowess next,
 Gabriel; lead forth to battle these my sons
 Invincible; lead forth my armed Saints,
 By thousands and by millions ranged for fight,

15 **orient beams** cf. iv, 644 19 in **procinct** in readiness 25 **the sacred hill** cf. v, 619
 29-30 A combination of “Well done, thou good and faithful servant” (Matt. xxv, 21)
 and “I have fought a good fight” (2 Tim. iv, 7). 32 Interpretable as a boost for the
 mightier pen.

Equal in number to that godless crew
 Rebellious. Them with fire and hostile arms
 Fearless assault, and, to the brow of Heaven
 Pursuing, drive them out from God and bliss
 Into their place of punishment, the gulf
 Of Tartarus, which ready opens wide
 His fiery chaos to receive their fall.”
 ‘So spake the Sovran Voice, and clouds began
 To darken all the hill, and smoke to roll
 In dusky wreaths reluctant° flames, the sign
 Of wrath awaked, nor with less dread the loud
 Ethereal trumpet from on high ’gan blow.°
 At which command the Powers Militant
 That stood for Heaven, in mighty quadrate° joined
 Of union irresistible, moved on
 In silence their bright legions to° the sound
 Of instrumental harmony, that breathed
 Heroic ardour to adventurous deeds
 Under their godlike leaders, in the cause
 Of God and his Messiah. On they move,
 Indissolubly firm; nor obvious° hill,
 Nor straitening vale, nor wood, nor stream divides
 Their perfect ranks, for high above the ground
 Their march was, and the passive air upbore
 Their nimble tread;° as when the total kind
 Of birds, in orderly array on wing,
 Came summoned over Eden to receive
 Their names of thee, so over many a tract
 Of Heaven they marched, and many a province wide,
 Tenfold the length of this terrene. At last,
 Far in the horizon to the north, appeared
 From skirt to skirt a fiery region, stretched
 In battailous aspect, and, nearer view,
 Bristled with upright beams innumerable
 Of rigid spears, and helmets thronged, and shields

49-50 **crew/Rebellious** cf. iv, 952 56—60 Such were the signs of God on Sinai,
 Exodus, xix, 16, 18-19. 58 **reluctant** struggling (against the smoke) 62 **quadrate** in
 “square” formation 63-64 **moved on/In silence** . . . to cf. i, 561 69 **obvious** Latin
obvius, lying in the way 73 **nimble tread** cf. “tread of nimble feet,” iv, 866

Various, with boastful arguments° portrayed,
 The banded Powers of Satan hasting on
 With furious expedition:° for they weened
 That selfsame day, by fight or by surprise,

To win the Mount of God, and on his throne
 To set the envier of his state, the proud
 Aspirer, but their thoughts proved fond^o and vain
 In the mid-way, though strange to us it seemed
 At first that Angel should with Angel war,
 And in fierce hosting meet, who wont to meet
 So oft in festivals of joy and love
 Unanimous as sons of one great Sire,
 Hymning the Eternal Father. But the shout
 Of battle now began, and rushing sound
 Of onset ended soon each milder thought.
 High in the midst, exalted as a God,
 The Apostate in his sun-bright chariot sat,
 Idol of majesty divine, enclosed
 With flaming Cherubim and golden shields,
 Then lighted from his gorgeous throne, for now
 'Twixt host and host but narrow space was left,
 A dreadful interval, and front to front
 Presented stood, in terrible array
 Of hideous length. Before the cloudy van,
 On the rough edge of battle^o ere it joined,
 Satan, with vast and haughty strides advanced,
 Come towering, armed in adamant and gold.^o
 Abdiel that sight endured not,^o where he stood
 Among the mightiest, bent on highest deeds,^o
 And thus his own undaunted heart explores:
 "O Heaven! that such resemblance of the Highest^o
 Should yet remain, where faith and realty^o
 Remain not; wherefore should not strength and might
 There fail where virtue fails, or weakest prove

84 **arguments** mottoes 86 **expedition** a pun, since the Latin meaning is haste 90
fond foolish 108 **edge of battle** cf. i, 276-77 and note 109—110 Compare Achilles:
 "Then to the city, terrible and strong,/ With high and haughty steps he tower'd
 along." Pope's translation of *Iliad*, XXII, 21-22. 111 **that sight endured not** Virgil's
 "*Non tulit hanc speciem,*" *Aeneid* II, 407 112 **highest deeds** cf. v, 865 114-26 not
 spoken 115 **realty** reality (if not a misprint for lealty or fealty)

Where boldest, though to sight unconquerable?
 His puissance, trusting in the Almighty's aid,
 I mean to try, whose reason I have tried
 Unsound and false, nor is it aught but just
 That he who in debate of truth hath won
 Should win in arms, in both disputes alike
 Victor. Though brutish that contest and foul,
 When reason hath to deal with force, yet so
 Most reason is that reason overcome."
 'So pondering, and from his armed peers
 Forth-stepping opposite, halfway he met
 His daring foe, at this prevention more
 Incensed, and thus securely^o him defied:
 "Proud, art thou met? Thy hope was to have reached
 The height of thy aspiring unopposed,
 The throne of God unguarded, and his side
 Abandoned at the terror of thy power
 Or potent tongue. Fool! not to think how vain
 Against the Omnipotent to rise in arms,
 Who out of smallest things could without end
 Have raised incessant armies to defeat
 Thy folly, or, with solitary hand
 Reaching beyond all limit, at one blow
 Unaided could have finished thee and whelmed

Thy legions under darkness; but thou seest
 All are not of thy train; there be who° faith
 Prefer, and piety to God, though then
 To thee not visible when I alone
 Seemed in thy world erroneous to dissent
 From all: my sect° thou seest; now learn too late
 How few sometimes may know when thousands err.”

‘Whom the grand Foe, with scornful eye askance,
 Thus answered: “Ill for thee, but in wished hour
 Of my revenge first sought for thou return’st
 From flight, seditious Angel, to receive
 Thy merited reward, the first assay
 Of this right hand provoked, since first that tongue,
 Inspired with contradiction, durst oppose

130 **securely** fearlessly 143 **there be who** there are some who 147 sect a word used
 with seventeenth-century flavor and fervor

A third part of the gods, in synod met
 Their deities to assert, who, while they feel
 Vigour divine within them, can allow
 Omnipotence to none. But well thou com’st
 Before thy fellows, ambitious to win
 From me some plume, that thy success may show
 Destruction to the rest. This pause between
 (Unanswered lest thou boast) to let thee know;
 At first I thought that Liberty and Heaven
 To heavenly souls had been all one, but now
 I see that most through sloth had rather serve,
 Ministering Spirits, trained up in feast and song:
 Such hast thou armed, the minstrelsy of Heaven,
 Servility with freedom to contend,
 As both their deeds compared this day shall prove.”

‘To whom, in brief, thus Abdiel stern replied:
 “Apostate, still thou err’st, nor end wilt find
 Of erring, from the path of truth remote;
 Unjustly thou deprav’st it with the name
 Of servitude, to serve whom God ordains,°
 Or Nature: God and Nature bid the same,
 When he who rules is worthiest and excels
 Them whom he governs. This is servitude,
 To serve the unwise, or him who hath rebelled
 Against his worthier, as thine now serve thee
 Thyself not free, but to thyself enthralled;
 Yet lewdly° dar’st our ministering upbraid.
 Reign thou in Hell, thy kingdom; let me serve
 In Heaven God ever blest, and his divine°
 Behests obey, worthiest to be obeyed.
 Yet chains in Hell, not realms, expect; meanwhile,
 From me returned, as erst thou saidst, from flight,
 This greeting on thy impious crest receive.”

‘So saying, a noble stroke he lifted high,
 Which hung not, but so swift with tempest fell
 On the proud crest of Satan that no sight,
 Nor motion of swift thought, less could his shield,
 Such ruin intercept. Ten paces huge
 He back recoiled;° the tenth on bended knee

175 **God ordains** as at iv, 636 182 **lewdly** basely 183-84 cf. i, 263 194 **He back**
recoiled cf. ii, 759. Similarly “Amazement seized” is common to 198 and ii, 758.

His massy spear upstayed, as if, on earth,

Winds under ground. or waters forcing way,
 Sidelong had pushed a mountain from his seat,
 Half-sunk with all his pines. Amazement seized
 The rebel Thrones, but greater rage, to see
 Thus foiled their mightiest; ours joy filled, and shout,
 Presage of victory, and fierce desire°
 Of battle: whereat Michael bid sound
 The Archangel trumpet. Through the vast of Heaven
 It sounded, and the faithful armies rung
 Hosanna to the Highest; nor stood at gaze
 The adverse legions. nor less hideous joined
 The horrid shock. Now storming fury rose,
 And clamour such as heard in Heaven till now
 Was never; arms on armour clashing brayed
 Horrible discord, and the madding° wheels
 Of brazen chariots raged; dire was the noise
 Of conflict; overhead the dismal hiss
 Of fiery darts in flaming volleys flew,
 And, flying, vaulted either host with fire.°
 So under fiery cope together rushed
 Both battles° main, with ruinous assault
 And inextinguishable rage. All Heaven
 Resounded, and, had Earth been then, all Earth
 Had to her centre shook. What wonder, when
 Millions of fierce encountering Angels fought
 On either side, the least of whom could wield
 These elements, and arm him with the force
 Of all their regions? How much more of power
 Army against army numberless to raise
 Dreadful combustion warring, and disturb,
 Though not destroy, their happy native seat;
 Had not the Eternal King° Omnipotent
 From his strong hold of Heaven high overruled
 And limited their might; though numbered such
 As each divided legion might have seemed
 A numerous host; in strength each armed hand

201 **fierce desire** cf. iv, 509 210 **madding** whirling 214 **vaulted . . . with fire** This
 phrase links war with hell, i, 298. 216 **battles** armies (cf. battalions) 227 **Eternal**
King cf. iii, 374

A legion; led in fight, yet leader seemed
 Each warrior single as in chief, expert
 When to advance, or stand, or turn the sway
 Of battle, open when, and when to close
 The ridges of grim war; no thought of flight,
 None of retreat, no unbecoming deed
 That argued fear; each on himself relied
 As only in his arm the moment lay
 Of victory. Deeds of eternal fame
 Were done, but infinite, for wide was spread
 That war, and various: sometimes on firm ground
 A standing fight, then, soaring on main wing,
 Tormented all the air; all air seemed then
 Conflicting fire. Long time in even scale
 The battle hung, till Satan, who that day
 Prodigious power had shown, and met in arms
 No equal, ranging through the dire attack
 Of fighting Seraphim confused, at length
 Saw where the sword of Michael smote, and felled
 Squadrons at once: with huge two-handed sway
 Brandished aloft, the horrid edge came down

Wide-wasting. Such destruction to withstand
 He hasted, and opposed the rocky orb
 Of tenfold adamant, his ample shield,
 A vast circumference. At his approach
 The great Archangel from his warlike toil
 Surceased, and, glad, as hoping here to end
 Intestine war^o in Heaven, the Arch-foe subdued,
 Or captive dragged in chains, with hostile frown
 And visage all inflamed, first thus began:
 ‘ “Author of Evil, unknown till thy revolt,
 Unnamed in Heaven, now plenteous, as thou seest,
 These acts of hateful strife—hateful to all,
 Though heaviest, by just measure, on thyself
 And thy adherents—how hast thou disturbed
 Heaven’s blessed peace, and into Nature brought
 Misery, uncreated till the crime
 Of thy rebellion! how hast thou instilled
 Thy malice into thousands, once upright
 And faithful, now proved false! But think not here

259 **Intestine war** civil war

To trouble holy rest; Heaven casts thee out
 From all her confines; Heaven, the seat of bliss,
 Brooks not the works of violence and war.
 Hence, then, and Evil go with thee along,
 Thy offspring, to the place of Evil, Hell,
 Thou and thy wicked crew; there mingle broils,
 Ere this avenging sword begin thy doom,
 Or some more sudden vengeance, winged from God,
 Precipitate thee with augmented pain.”

‘So spake the Prince of Angels; to whom thus
 The Adversary: “Nor think thou with wind
 Of airy threats to awe whom yet with deeds
 Thou canst not. Hast thou turned the least of these
 To flight—or, if to fall, but that they rise
 Unvanquished—easier to transact with me
 That thou shouldst hope, imperious, and with threats
 To chase me hence? Err not that^o so shall end
 The strife which thou call’st evil, but we style
 The strife of glory—which we mean to win,
 Or turn this Heaven itself into the Hell
 Thou fablest; here, however, to dwell free,
 If not to reign. Meanwhile thy utmost force,
 And join him named Almighty to thy aid,
 I fly not, but have sought thee far and nigh.”

‘They ended parle,^o and both addressed for fight
 Unspeakable; for who, though with the tongue
 Of Angels, can relate, or to what things
 Liken on Earth conspicuous, that may lift
 Human imagination to such height
 Of godlike power? for likest gods they seemed,
 Stood they or moved, in stature, motion, arms,
 Fit to decide the empire of great Heaven.
 Now waved their fiery swords, and in the air
 Made horrid circles; two broad suns their shields
 Blazed opposite, while Expectation stood
 In horror; from each hand with speed retired,
 Where erst was thickest fight, the Angelic throng,^o
 And left large field, unsafe within the wind

288 **Err not that** do not wrongly think that 296 **They ended parle** The parley
 between warriors has been after the Homeric fashion. 308 **the Angelic throng** cf. v,
 650

Of such commotion: such as (to set forth
 Great things by small) if, Nature's concord broke,
 Among the constellations war were sprung,
 Two planets, rushing from aspect malign
 Of fiercest opposition, in mid sky
 Should combat, and their jarring spheres confound.
 Together both, with next to almighty arm
 Uplifted imminent, one stroke they aimed°
 That might determine, and not need repeat,
 As not of power, at once; nor odds appeared
 In might or swift prevention. But the sword
 Of Michael° from the armoury of God
 Was given him tempered so that neither keen
 Nor solid might resist that edge; it met
 The sword of Satan, with steep force to smite
 Descending, and in half cut sheer, nor stayed,
 But, with swift wheel reverse, deep entering, sheared
 All his right side. Then Satan first knew pain,°
 And writhed him to and fro convolved; so sore
 The griding° sword with discontinuous wound
 Passed through him—but the ethereal substance closed,
 Not long divisible, and from the gash
 A stream of nectarous humour issuing flowed
 Sanguine, such as celestial Spirits may bleed,
 And all his armour stained, erewhile so bright.
 Forthwith, on all sides, to his aid was run°
 By Angels many and strong, who interposed
 Defence, while others bore him on their shields
 Back to his chariot, where it stood retired°
 From off the files of war;° there they him laid
 Gnashing for anguish, and despite, and shame
 To find himself not matchless, and his pride
 Humbled by such rebuke, so far beneath
 His confidence to equal God in power.

317 Sound and rhythm echo sense. 320-21 **the sword/Of Michael** mentioned at 250
 and ii, 294. The “armoury of God” derives from Jeremiah, 1 (50), 25. 327 **Then**
Satan first knew pain at odds, perhaps, with ii, 752 329 griding cutting with a
 grating sound 335 **was run** the Latin impersonal passive 336-38 Modeled on the
 rescue of the wounded Hector, *Iliad*, XIV, 427-30. 339 **the files of war** “the armed
 files,” i, 567, or ranks

Yet soon he healed; for Spirits that live throughout
 Vital in every part, not, as frail Man,
 In entrails, heart or head, liver or reins,°
 Cannot but by annihilating die;
 Nor in their liquid texture mortal wound
 Receive, no more than can the fluid air;
 All heart they live, all head, all eye, all ear,
 All intellect, all sense, and as they please
 They limb themselves, and colour, shape, or size
 Assume, as like them best, condense or rare.
 ‘Meanwhile, in other parts, like deeds deserved
 Memorial, where the might of Gabriel° fought,
 And with fierce ensigns pierced the deep array
 Of Moloch, furious king, who him defied,
 And at his chariot-wheels to drag him bound
 Threatened, nor from the Holy One of Heaven

Refrained his tongue blasphemous, but anon,
 Down cloven to the waist, with shattered arms
 And uncouth^o pain fled bellowing. On each wing
 Uriel and Raphael his vaunting foe,^o
 Though huge and in a rock of diamond armed,
 Vanquished Adramelech^o and Asmadai,^o
 Two potent Thrones, that to be less than Gods
 Disdained, but meaner thoughts learned in the flight,
 Mangled with ghastly wounds through plate and mail.
 Nor stood unmindful Abdiel to annoy
 The atheist crew, but with redoubled blow
 Ariel,^o and Arioch,^o and the violence
 Of Ramiel,^o scorched and blasted, overthrew.

346 **reins** kidneys 355 **the might of Gabriel** Homerism for “the mighty Gabriel”
 362 **uncouth** strange, hitherto unknown 363 As a relater whose name Adam does not
 know, and in modesty, Raphael speaks of himself in the third person. 365
Adramelech originally an idol of the Sepharvites, who burned their children to him
 (the first part of his name probably means fire) 2 Kings, xvii, 31. **Asmadai** same as
 Asmodeus, iv, 168; by medieval tradition chief of the fourth order of the fallen
 angels. 371 **Ariel** Sometimes translated as “lionlike,” thus his fierceness, but also
 doubtless associated with Ares. **Arioch** known to demonologists as the spirit of
 revenge. 372 **Ramiel** “Thunder of God.” The name occurs in the Book of Enoch and
 Cabalistic demonologies.

I might relate of thousands, and their names
 Eternize here on Earth, but those elect
 Angels, contented with their fame in Heaven,
 Seek not the praise of men: the other sort,
 In might though wondrous and in acts of war,
 Nor of renown less eager, yet by doom
 Cancelled from Heaven and sacred memory,
 Nameless in dark oblivion let them dwell.
 For strength from truth divided, and from just,
 Illaudable,^o naught merits but dispraise
 And ignominy, yet to glory aspires,
 Vain-glorious, and through infamy seeks fame:
 Therefore eternal silence be their doom!
 ‘And now, their mightiest quelled, the battle swerved,
 With many an inroad gored; deformed rout
 Entered, and foul disorder; all the ground
 With shivered armour strown, and on a heap
 Chariot and charioteer lay overturned,
 And fiery foaming steeds;^o what stood, recoiled
 O’erwearied, through the faint Satanic host,
 Defensive scarce, or with pale fear surprised—
 Then first with fear surprised and sense of pain—
 Fled ignominious, to such evil brought
 By sin of disobedience, till that hour
 Not liable to fear, or flight, or pain.
 Far otherwise the inviolable Saints
 In cubic phalanx firm advanced entire,
 Invulnerable, impenetrably armed;
 Such high advantages their innocence
 Gave them above their foes, not to have sinned,
 Not to have disobeyed; in fight they stood
 Unwearied, unobnoxious to be pained^o
 By wound, though from their place by violence moved.
 ‘Now Night her course began, and, over Heaven
 Inducing^o darkness, grateful^o truce imposed
 And silence on the odious din of war.^o

382 **Illaudable** unworthy of praise 391 **foaming steeds** anticipating xi, 643, while
fiery looks back: 17; ii, 531; iii, **522** 404 **unobnoxious to be pained** unliable to
 harm 407 **Inducing** bringing on **grateful** pleasing, as at iv, 331 408 **din of war** cf. i,
 668

Under her cloudy covert both retired,
 Victor and vanquished; on the foughten field
 Michael and his Angels prevalent
 Encamping, placed in guard their watches round,
 Cherubic waving fires;° on the other part,
 Satan with his rebellious disappeared,
 Far in the dark dislodged, and, void of rest,
 His potentates to council called by night,
 And in the midst thus undismayed began:
 “O now in danger tried, now known in arms
 Not to be overpowered, companions dear,°
 Found worthy not of liberty alone,
 Too mean pretence, but, what we more affect,
 Honour, dominion, glory, and renown;
 Who have sustained one day in doubtful fight
 (And, if one day, why not eternal days?)
 What Heaven’s Lord had powerfulest to send
 Against us from about his throne, and judged
 Sufficient to subdue us to his will,
 But proves not so, then fallible, it seems,
 Of future we may deem him, though till now
 Omniscient thought. True is, less firmly armed,
 Some disadvantage we endured, and pain,
 Till now not known, but, known, as soon contemned;
 Since now we find this our empyreal form
 Incapable of mortal injury,
 Imperishable, and, though, pierced with wound,
 Soon closing, and by native vigour healed.
 Of evil, then, so small as easy think
 The remedy; perhaps more valid arms,
 Weapons more violent, when next we meet,
 May serve to better us and worse our foes,
 Or equal what between us made the odds,
 In nature none. If other hidden cause
 Left them superior, while we can preserve
 Unhurt our minds, and understanding sound,
 Due search and consultation will disclose.”
 ‘He sat; and in the assembly next upstood

413 The “flaming Cherubim” (102) were, as usual, employed as sentinels. 419
companions dear cf. v, 673

Nisroch,° of Principalities the prime:
 As one he stood escaped from cruel fight,
 Sore toiled, his riven arms to havoc hewn,
 And, cloudy in aspect, thus answering spake:
 ‘ “Deliverer from new Lords, leader to free
 Enjoyment of our right as Gods; yet hard
 For Gods, and too unequal work, we find
 Against unequal arms to fight in pain,
 Against unpained, impassive°—from which evil
 Ruin must needs ensue. For what avails
 Valour or strength, though matchless, quelled with pain,
 Which all subdues, and makes remiss the hands
 Of mightiest? Sense of pleasure we may well
 Spare out of life perhaps, and not repine,

But live content, which is the calmest life;
 But pain is perfect misery, the worst
 Of evils, and, excessive, overturns
 All patience. He who, therefore, can invent
 With what more forcible we may offend
 Our yet unwounded enemies, or arm
 Ourselves with like defence, to me deserves
 No less than for deliverance what we owe.”^o

‘Whereto, with look composed, Satan replied:
 “Not uninvented that, which thou aright
 Believ’st so main to our success, I bring.
 Which of us who beholds the bright surface
 Of this ethereous mould whereon we stand,
 This continent of spacious Heaven, adorned
 With plant, fruit, flower ambrosial, gems and gold,
 Whose eye so superficially surveys
 These things as not to mind from whence they grow
 Deep under ground: materials dark and crude,
 Of spiritous and fiery spume, till, touched
 With Heaven’s ray, and tempered, they shoot forth
 So beauteous, opening to the ambient light?
 These in their dark nativity the Deep

447 **Nisroch** the name of an idol of Nineveh in whose temple the Assyrian king
 Sennacherib was worshiping when assassinated by his sons 455 Only the sinful,
 rebellious angels suffer pain. 467-68 **to me deserves**, etc. In my opinion deserves no
 less than what we owe (to Satan) for our deliverance (from the tyranny of heaven).

Shall yield us, pregnant with infernal flame,
 Which, into hollow engines long and round
 Thick-rammed, at the other bore with touch of fire
 Dilated and infuriate, shall send forth
 From far, with thundering noise, among our foes
 Such implements of mischief as shall dash
 To pieces and o’erwhelm whatever stands
 Adverse, that they shall fear we have disarmed
 The Thunderer of his only dreaded bolt.
 Nor long shall be our labour, yet ere dawn
 Effect shall end our wish. Meanwhile revive,
 Abandon fear; to strength and counsel joined
 Think nothing hard, much less to be despaired.”

‘He ended; and his words their drooping cheer
 Enlightened, and their languished hope revived,
 The invention all admired, and each how he
 To be the inventor missed, so easy it seemed
 Once found, which yet unfound most would have thought
 Impossible; yet, haply, of thy race,
 In future days, if malice should abound,
 Someone, intent on mischief or inspired
 With devilish machination,^o might devise
 Like instrument to plague the sons of men
 For sin, on war and mutual slaughter bent.
 Forthwith from council to the work they flew;
 None arguing stood; innumerable hands
 Were ready; in a moment up they turned
 Wide the celestial soil, and saw beneath
 The originals of Nature in their crude
 Conception; sulphurous and nitrous foam
 They found, they mingled, and, with subtle art,
 Concocted and adusted,^o they reduced
 To blackest grain, and into store conveyed.

504 **devilish machination** Spenser, following Renaissance tradition, spoke of “that devilish iron engine”—it is Milton’s “devilish engine” of iv, 17—“wrought/ In deepest hell, and fram’d by furies’ skill,/ With windy nitre and quick sulphur fraught,/ And ramm’d with bullet round, ordained to kill.” *Faerie Queene*, I, vii, 13,1—4. Voltaire in *Candide* complained that Milton “imitates seriously Ariosto’s comical invention of firearms by making the devils fire a cannon in Heaven.” 514
Concocted and adusted baked and burned to ashes

Part hidden veins digged up (nor hath this Earth
Entrails unlike) of mineral and stone,
Whereof to found their engines and their balls
Of missive ruin;^o part incentive reed^o
Provide, pernicious with one touch to fire.
So all ere day-spring, under conscious Night,
Secret they finished, and in order set,
With silent circumspection, unespied.
‘Now, when fair Morn orient in Heaven appeared,
Up rose the victor Angels, and to arms
The matin trumpet sung. In arms they stood
Of golden panoply, refulgent host,
Soon banded; others from the dawning hills
Looked round, and scouts each coast light-armed scour
Each quarter to descry the distant foe,
Where lodged, or whither fled, or if for fight,
In motion or in halt. Him soon they met
Under spread ensigns^o moving nigh, in slow
But firm battalion; back with speediest sail
Zophiel,^o of Cherubim the swiftest wing.
Came flying, and in mid-air aloud thus cried:
“Arm, Warriors, arm for fight, the foe at hand,
Whom fled we thought, will save us long pursuit
This day; fear not his flight—so thick a cloud
He comes, and settled in his face I see
Sad resolution and secure. Let each
His adamantine coat gird well, and each
Fit well his helm, grip fast his orbèd shield,
Borne even or high, for this day will pour down
If I conjecture aught, no drizzling shower,
But rattling storm of arrows barbed with fire.”
‘So warned he them, aware themselves, and soon
In order, quit of all impediment,
Instant, without disturb, they took alarm,
And onward move embattled: when, behold,
Not distant far, with heavy pace the foe
Approaching gross and huge, in hollow cube
Training his devilish enginery,^o impaled

519 **missive ruin** missile destruction **incentive reed** Miltonic diction for the gunner’s match; cf. 579-80 533 **Under spread ensigns** cf. ii, 886 535 **Zophiel** “Spy of God” or “Scout” 553 **devilish enginery** see note to 504

On every side with shadowing squadrons deep,
To hide the fraud. At interview both stood
A while but suddenly at head appeared
Satan, and thus was heard commanding loud:
“anguard, to right and left the front unfold,
That all may see who hate us how we seek
Peace and composure,^o and with open breast
Stand ready to receive them, if they like
Our overture, and turn not back perverse—
But that I doubt. However, witness Heaven,

Heaven, witness thou anon, while we discharge
Freely our part. Ye, who appointed stand,
Do as you have in charge, and briefly touch
What we propound, and loud that all may hear.”

‘So scoffing in ambiguous words° he scarce
Had ended, when to right and left the front°
Divided, and to either flank retired,
Which to our eyes discovered, new and strange,
A triple-mounted row of pillars laid
On wheels (for like to pillars most they seemed,
Or hollowed bodies made of oak or fir,
With branches lopped, in wood or mountain felled),
Brass, iron, stony mould, had not their mouths
With hideous orifice gaped on us wide,
Portending hollow° truce. At each, behind,
A Seraph stood, and in his hand a reed
Stood waving, tipped with fire, while we, suspense,
Collected stood within our thoughts amused,°
Not long, for sudden all at once their reeds
Put forth, and to a narrow vent applied
With nicest touch. Immediate in a flame,
But soon obscured with smoke, all Heaven appeared,
From those deep-throated engines belched, whose roar

560 **composure** agreement, but also anticipatory of the pun in 612-13 568

ambiguous words cf. v. 703 569 **to right and left the front** as above, 558 578

hollow literal and figurative. The Sonnet to Vane has a comparable pun about the treacherous Hollanders—“hollow states.” 579—81. *Stood* three times in three lines has been criticized. Some such word as “held” has been conjectured for “stood” in 580. *Suspense* is an adjective meaning full of suspense; *amused* means wondering, in a muse.

Embowelled° with outrageous noise the air,
And all her entrails tore, disgorging foul
Their devilish glut, chained thunderbolts and hail
Of iron globes, which, on the victor host
Levelled, with such impetuous fury smote
That whom they hit none on their feet might stand,
Though standing else as rocks, but down they fell°
By thousands. Angel on Archangel rolled,
The sooner for their arms; unarmed, they might
Have easily, as Spirits, evaded swift
By quick contraction or remove; but now
Foul dissipation° followed, and forced rout,
Nor served it to relax their serried files.
What should they do? If on they rushed, repulse
Repeated and indecent° overthrow
Doubled would render them yet more despised,
And to their foes a laughter, for in view
Stood ranked of Seraphim another row,
In posture to displode° their second tire°
Of thunder; back defeated to return
They worse abhorred. Satan beheld their plight,
And to his mates thus in derision called:
‘“O friends, why come not on these victors proud?
Erewhile they fierce were coming, and, when we
To entertain them fair with open front
And breast° (what could we more?) propounded terms
Of composition,° straight they changed their minds,.
Flew off, and into strange vagaries fell,
As they would dance, yet for a dance they seemed°
Somewhat extravagant and wild; perhaps

For joy of offered peace. But I suppose,
If our proposals once again were heard,°

587 **Embowelled** filled 593 **down they fell** cf. ii, 771 598 **dissipation** scattering,
rout 601 **indecent** disgraceful 605 **displode** explode **tire** battery 611-12 **with
open . . . breast** cf. 560 613 In the fiendish series of puns (611-27), *composition* is
being used in both its figurative and its chemical (513-15) sense. 6.15 Doubtless in
reminiscence of two grim jests in Book XVI of the *Iliad*: Aeneas calls Meriones an
excellent dancer for dodging his spear, and Patroclus mocks Hector's charioteer,
Cebriones, who has plunged to his death from the chariot, as a nimble diver. 618
heard still punning

We should compel them to a quick result.”°

‘To whom thus Belial, in like gamesome mood:
“Leader, the terms we sent were terms of weight,
Of hard contents, and full of force urged home,
Such as we might perceive amused° them all,
And stumbled many. Who receives them right
Had need from head to foot well understand;°
Not understood, this gift they have besides,
They show us when our foes walk not upright.”

‘So they among themselves in pleasant vein
Stood scoffing, heightened in their thoughts beyond
All doubt of victory; Eternal Might
To match with their inventions they presumed
So easy, and of his thunder made a scorn
And all his host derided, while they stood
A while in trouble. But they stood not long;
Rage prompted them at length, and found them arms°
Against such hellish mischief fit to oppose.
Forthwith (behold the excellence, the power,
Which God hath in his mighty Angels placed)
Their arms away they threw, and to the hills
(For Earth hath this variety from Heaven
Of pleasure situate in hill and dale°)
Light as the lightning-glimpse they ran, they flew;°
From their foundations, loosening to and fro,
They plucked the seated hills, with all their load,°
Rocks, waters, woods, and, by the shaggy tops
Uplifting, bore them in their hands. Amaze,
Be sure, and terror seized the rebel host,
When coming towards them so dread they saw
The bottom of the mountains upward turned,
Till on those cursed engines’ triple row

619 **result** remembering the Latin meaning, *resultare*, to spring back. 623 **amused**
i.e., stunned 625 **understand** stand under, a Shakespearean quibble; see *Two
Gentlemen of Verona*, II, v, 23 ff. 635 **Rage . . . found them arms** *furor arma
ministrat* (*Aen.* I, 150) 641 **hill and dale** a familiar combination, iv, 243; cf. ii, 944;
iv, 538; viii, 262 642 “And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of
a flash of lightning” (Ezek. i, 14). 644 The Giants against the Titans resorted to
similar tactics, and Otus and Ephialtes in an assault on the gods of Olympus piled
Mount Pelion on Mount Ossa.

They saw them whelmed, and all their confidence
Under the weight of mountains buried deep;
Themselves invaded next, and on their heads
Main promontories flung, which in the air
Came shadowing, and oppressed whole legions armed.
Their armour helped their harm,° crushed in and bruised,
Into their substance pent, which wrought them pain
Implacable, and many a dolorous groan,

Long struggling underneath ere they could wind
 Out of such prison, though Spirits of purest light,
 Purest at first, now gross by sinning grown.
 The rest, in imitation, to like arms
 Betook them, and the neighbouring hills uptore;
 So hills amid the air encountered hills,
 Hurl'd to and fro with jaculation^o dire
 That under ground they fought in dismal shade:^o
 Infernal noise! war seemed a civil game
 To this uproar; horrid confusion heaped
 Upon confusion rose. And now all Heaven
 Had gone to wrack,^o with ruin overspread,
 Had not the Almighty Father, where he sits
 Shrined in his sanctuary of Heaven secure,
 Consulting on the sum of things, foreseen
 This tumult and permitted all, advised,
 That his great purpose he might so fulfill
 To honour his anointed Son, avenged
 Upon his enemies, and to declare
 All power on him transferred: whence to his Son,
 The assessor^o of his throne, he thus began:
 ‘“Effulgence of my glory,^o Son beloved,
 Son in whose face invisible is beheld
 Visibly what by Deity I am

656 **Their armour helped their harm** an encapsulation of like sounds 665
jaculation throwing 666 A Spartan at Thermopylae, told that “Such was the number
 of the barbarians, that when they shot forth their arrows the sun would be darkened
 by their multitude,” answered: “If the Medes darken the sun, we shall have our fight
 in the shade.” 670 **Had gone to wrack** cf. iv, 994 679 **assessor** sharer (literally, co-
 sitter). “So the Son is called by some of the Fathers, thus expressing in one word the
 doctrine of the Creed, ‘sitteth at the right hand of the Father’” (R. C. Browne). 680
Effulgence of my glory cf. iii, 388

And in whose hand what by decree I do,
 Second Omnipotence, two days are passed,
 Two days, as we compute the days of Heaven,
 Since Michael and his Powers went forth to tame
 These disobedient; sore hath been their fight,
 As likeliest was when two such foes met armed,
 For to themselves I left them, and thou know’st
 Equal in their creation they were formed,
 Save what sin hath impaired,^o which yet hath wrought
 Insensibly, for I suspend their doom;
 Whence in perpetual fight they needs must last
 Endless, and no solution will be found.
 War wearied hath performed what war can do,
 And to disordered rage let loose the reins,
 With mountains, as with weapons, armed, which makes
 Wild work^o in Heaven, and dangerous to the main.^o
 Two days are, therefore, passed, the third is thine:
 For thee I have ordained it, and thus far
 Have suffered that the glory may be thine
 Of ending this great war, since none but thou
 Can end it. Into thee such virtue and grace
 Immense I have transfused, that all may know
 In Heaven and Hell thy power above compare,
 And this perverse commotion governed thus,
 To manifest thee worthiest to be Heir
 Of all things, to be Heir, and to be King
 By sacred unction,^o thy deserved right.
 Go, then, thou Mightiest, in thy Father’s might;

Ascend my chariot; guide the rapid wheels
 That shake Heaven's basis; bring forth all my war;
 My bow and thunder, my almighty arms,
 Gird on, and sword upon thy puissant thigh;^o
 Pursue these Sons of Darkness,^o drive them out
 From all Heaven's bounds into the utter Deep;
 There let them learn, as likes them, to despise
 God, and Messiah his anointed King."

691 **impaired** remembering the literal sense of *unequaled* 698 **Wild work**
 differently applied at v, 112 **the main** the universe. 709 **By sacred unction** cf. Psalm
 xlv, 7 714 "Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Most Mighty" (Ps. xlv, 3). 715 **Sons of**
Darkness in contrast to "the Sons of Morn," v, 716

'He said, and on his Son with rays direct
 Shone full, he all his Father full expressed
 Ineffably into his face received;
 And thus the Filial Godhead answering spake:
 "O Father, O Supreme of Heavenly Thrones,
 First, Highest, Holiest, Best, thou always seek'st
 To glorify thy Son; I always thee,
 As is most just. This I my glory account,
 My exaltation and my whole delight,
 That thou in me well pleased declar'st thy will
 Fulfilled, which to fulfill is all my bliss.
 Sceptre and power, thy giving, I assume,
 And gladlier shall resign when in the end
 Thou shalt be all in all, and I in thee^o
 Forever, and in me all whom thou lov'st.
 But whom thou hat'st I hate,^o and can put on
 Thy terrors as I put thy mildness on,
 Image of thee in all things; and shall soon,
 Armed with thy might, rid Heaven of these rebelled,
 To their prepared ill mansion^o driven down
 To chains of darkness and the undying worm,^o
 That from thy just obedience could revolt,
 Whom to obey is happiness entire.
 Then shall thy Saints, unmixed, and from the impure
 Far separate, circling thy holy mount,
 Unfeigned halleluiahs to thee sing,
 Hymns of high praise, and I among them chief."
 'So said, he, o'er his sceptre bowing, rose
 From the right hand of Glory where he sat,
 And the third sacred morn began to shine,
 Dawning through Heaven. Forth rushed with
 whirlwind sound^o
 The chariot of Paternal Deity,
 Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel indrawn,
 Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
 By four cherubic Shapes. Four faces each

732 cf. iii, 341 734 "Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee?" (Ps. cxxxix, 21).
 738 **ill mansion** cf. ii, 462 739 **undying worm** Isaiah, lxvi, 24; Mark, ix, 44 749-59
 Modeled on Ezekiel's vision (ch. i) of four cherubim and four wheels. As Broadbent
 observes, "It was a convention in hexemeral epics to use Ezekiel's chariot to end the
 angelomachia."

Had wondrous; as with stars, their bodies all
 And wings were set with eyes, with eyes the wheels
 Of beryl, and careering fires between;
 Over their heads a crystal firmament,
 Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
 Amber and colours of the showery arch.

He, in celestial panoply all armed
 Of radiant Urim,^o work divinely wrought,
 Ascended; at his right hand Victory
 Sat eagle-winged; beside him hung his bow
 And quiver with three-bolted thunder stored;
 And from about him fierce effusion rolled
 Of smoke and bickering^o flame and sparkles dire.
 Attended with ten thousand thousand Saints^o
 He onward came; far off his coming shone,
 And twenty thousand (I their number heard)
 Chariots of God, half on each hand, were seen.^o
 He on the wings of Cherub rode sublime
 On the crystalline sky, in sapphire throned.
 Illustrious far and wide, but by his own
 First seen, them unexpected joy surprised
 When the great ensign of Messiah blazed
 Aloft, by Angels borne, his sign in Heaven,
 Under whose conduct Michael soon reduced^o
 His army, circumfused^o on either wing,
 Under their Head embodied all in one.
 Before him Power Divine his way prepared;
 At his command the uprooted hills retired
 Each to his place; they heard his voice, and went
 Obsequious; Heaven his wonted face renewed,
 And with fresh flowerets^o hill and valley smiled.
 This saw his hapless foes, but stood obdured,
 And to rebellious fight rallied their Powers,
 Insensate, hope conceiving from despair.

761 **Urim** first mentioned in the Bible as Aaron's "breastplate of judgment," Exodus
 xxviii, 30. Probably a traditional survival of lots used in divination. Roman Version
 has "Lights" for Urim: compare "radiant" here. 766 **bickering** flickering 767 cf.
 Jude, xiv; Revelation, v, 11 769-70 Psalm Ixviii, 17 777 **reduced** led back 778
circumfused spread about 784 **with fresh flowerets** cf. v, 636

In Heavenly Spirits could such perverseness dwell?^o
 But to convince the proud what signs avail,
 Or wonders move the obdurate to relent?
 They, hardened more by what might most reclaim,
 Grieving to see his glory, at the sight
 Took envy, and, aspiring to his height,
 Stood re-embattled fierce, by force or fraud
 Weening to prosper, and at length prevail
 Against God and Messiah, or to fall
 In universal ruin last; and now
 To final battle drew, disdaining flight
 Or faint retreat; when the great Son of God
 To all his host on either hand thus spake:
 "Stand still in bright array, ye Saints; here stand,
 Ye angels armed; this day from battle rest.
 Faithful hath been your warfare, and of God
 Accepted, fearless in his righteous cause;
 And, as ye have received, so have ye done,
 Invincibly; but of this cursed crew
 The punishment to other hand belongs;
 Vengeance is his, or whose he sole appoints.^o
 Number to this day's work is not ordained,
 Nor multitude; stand only and behold
 God's indignation on these godless poured
 By me; not you, but me, they have despised,
 Yet envied; against me is all their rage,
 Because the Father, to whom in Heaven supreme

Kingdom and power and glory appertains,
 Hath honoured me, according to his will.
 Therefore to me their doom he hath assigned,
 That they may have their wish, to try with me
 In battle which the stronger proves, they all,
 Or I alone against them, since by strength
 They measure all, of other excellence
 Not emulous, nor care who them excels;
 Nor other strife with them do I vouchsafe.”
 ‘So spake the Son, and into terror changed
 His countenance, too severe to be beheld,

788 an imitation of Virgil’s well-known “*tantaene animis caelestibus irae?*” (*Aen.* I, 11) 808 Romans, xii. 19

And full of wrath bent on his enemies.°
 At once the Four spread out their starry wings
 With dreadful shade contiguous, and the orbs
 Of his fierce chariot rolled, as with the sound
 Of torrent floods, or of a numerous host.°
 He on his impious foes right onward drove,
 Gloomy as Night. Under his burning wheels
 The steadfast empyrean shook throughout,°
 All but the throne itself of God. Full soon
 Among them he arrived, in his right hand
 Grasping ten thousand thunders, which he sent
 Before him, such as in their souls infix’d
 Plagues.° They, astonished, all resistance lost,
 All courage; down their idle weapons dropped;
 O’er shields, and helms, and helmed heads he rode
 Of Thrones and mighty Seraphim prostrate,
 That wished the mountains now might be again
 Thrown on them as a shelter from his ire.°
 Nor less on either side tempestuous fell
 His arrows, from the fourfold-visaged Four,
 Distinct with eyes, and from the living wheels,
 Distinct alike with multitude of eyes;
 One spirit in them ruled, and every eye
 Glared lightning and shot forth pernicious fire
 Among the accurs’d, that withered all their strength
 And of their wonted vigour left them drained,
 Exhausted, spiritless, afflicted, fallen.
 Yet half his strength he put not forth, but checked
 His thunder in mid-volley, for he meant
 Not to destroy but root them out of Heaven.
 The overthrown he raised, and, as a herd
 Of goats or timorous flock together thronged,
 Drove them before him thunderstruck, pursued
 With terrors and with furies to the bounds
 And crystal wall of Heaven, which, opening wide,
 Rolled inward, and a spacious gap disclosed
 Into the wasteful Deep.° The monstrous sight

825-26 excommunication 830 **a numerous host** as at 231; ii, 993 833 cf. 712 838
Plagues in the Greek sense of *stroke*, *blow* 842—43 cf. Revelation, vi, 16 862 **the**
wasteful Deep cf. ii, 961

Struck them with horror backward, but far worse
 Urged them behind: headlong themselves they threw
 Down from the verge of Heaven; eternal wrath
 Burnt after them to the bottomless pit.

'Hell heard the unsufferable noise; Hell saw
 Heaven ruining° from Heaven, and would have fled
 Affrighted; but strict Fate had cast too deep
 Her° dark foundations, and too fast had bound.
 Nine days° they fell; confounded Chaos roared,
 And felt tenfold confusion in their fall
 Through his wild anarchy, so huge a rout
 Encumbered him with ruin. Hell at last,
 Yawning, received them whole, and on them closed°—
 Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
 Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.
 Disburdened Heaven rejoiced, and soon repaired
 Her mural breach,° returning whence it rolled.
 Sole victor, from the expulsion of his foes
 Messiah his triumphal chariot turned.
 To meet him all his Saints, who silent stood
 Eye-witness of his almighty acts,
 With jubilee advance, and, as they went,
 Shaded with branching palm,° each order bright
 Sung triumph, and him sung victorious King,
 Son, Heir, and Lord, to him dominion given,
 Worthiest to reign. He celebrated rode
 Triumphant through mid Heaven, into the courts
 And temple of his mighty Father° throned
 Oh high, who into glory him received,
 Where now he sits at the right hand of bliss.

'Thus, measuring things in Heaven by things on Earth,
 At thy request, and that thou may'st beware
 By what is past, to thee I have revealed
 What might have else to human race been hid:
 The discord which befell, and war in Heaven°
 Among the Angelic Powers, and the deep fall

868 **ruining** falling in ruins 870 **Her** Hell's 871 **Nine days** cf. i, 50 874-75 Isaiah, v, 14 879 **Her mural breach** breach in the walls 885 **branching palm** as in iv, 139 and *Samson Agonistes*, 1735 890 **mighty Father** cf. v, 735, 836 897 **war in Heaven** cf. i, 43

Of those too high aspiring who rebelled
 With Satan; he who envies now thy state,
 Who now is plotting how he may seduce
 Thee also from obedience, that, with him
 Bereaved of happiness, thou may'st partake
 His punishment, eternal misery,
 Which would be all his solace and revenge,
 As a despite done against the Most High,
 Thee once to gain companion of his woe.°
 But listen not to his temptations; warn
 Thy weaker,° let it profit thee to have heard,
 By terrible example, the reward
 Of disobedience; firm they might have stood,
 Yet fell; remember, and fear to transgress.'

907 This "misery loves company" idea has its similarly phrased exposition from the Tempter in *Paradise Regained* (i, 398—99); Envy, they say, excites me, thus to gain/ Companions of my misery and woe! 909 **Thy weaker** Eve is "the weaker vessel," 1 Peter, iii, 7.

BOOK VII

THE ARGUMENT

Raphael, at the request of Adam, relates how and wherefore this world was first created: that God, after the expelling of Satan and his Angels out of Heaven, declared his pleasure to create another world, and other creatures to dwell therein; sends his Son with glory, and attendance of Angels, to perform the work of creation in six days; the Angels celebrate with hymns the performance thereof, and his reascension into Heaven.

DESCEND from Heaven, Urania,^o by that name
If rightly thou art called, whose voice divine
Following, above the Olympian hill I soar,
Above the flight of Pegasean^o wing.
The meaning, not the name, I call; for thou
Nor of the Muses nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st, but, heavenly-born,
Before the hills appeared or fountain flowed,
Thou with eternal wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father,^o pleased
With thy celestial song.^o Up led by thee,
Into the Heaven of Heavens I have presumed,
An earthly guest, and drawn empyreal air,

1 **Urania** At first Milton invokes an unnamed "Heavenly Muse" (i, 6; iii, 19); here he uses the name of the Muse of astronomy among the ancients, but denies a link with the pagan Nine. In Du Bartas's *La Muse Chrétienne*, Urania is the celestial patroness of divine poetry. 4 **Pegasean** Pegasus was the immortal "flying steed" (17) of Bellerophon (18), whose hoofprint made the spring of Hippocrene (sacred to the Muses), which gave the gift of song to those who drank of it. 11 **the Almighty Father** cf. iii, 56, 386; vi, 671 8-12 see Proverbs, viii, 23-30

Thy tempering. With like safety guided down,
Return me to my native element,^o
Lest, from this flying steed unreined (as once
Bellerophon,^o though from a lower clime)
Dismounted, on the Aleian field^o I fall,
Erroneous^o there to wander and forlorn.
Half yet remains unsung, but narrower bound
Within the visible diurnal sphere;
Standing on Earth, not rapt above the pole,
More safe I sing with mortal voice, unchanged
To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,
On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues;
In darkness, and with dangers compassed round,
And solitude; yet not alone, while thou
Visit'st my slumbers nightly, or when Morn
Purples the East. Still govern thou my song,
Urania, and fit audience find, though few.^o
But drive far off the barbarous dissonance
Of Bacchus and his revellers,^o the race
Of that wild rout that tore the Thracian bard^o
In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears
To rapture till the savage clamour drowned
Both harp and voice, nor could the Muse defend
Her son. So fail not thou who thee implores,
For thou art heavenly, she an empty dream.

Say, Goddess, what ensued when Raphael,
The affable Archangel, had forewarned
Adam, by dire example, to beware
Apostasy, by what befell in Heaven

16 **my native element** earth; cf. 23 18 **Bellerophon** who dared many things on his
“flying steed”; when he presumed too far by attempting to mount to Olympus, or
Heaven, he was thrown; “hated of all the gods, then verily he wandered alone over
the Aleian plain, devouring his own soul, and shunning the paths of men” (*Iliad*, VI,
200 ff.) 19 **Aleian field** near Ale (= wandering; cf. 20) in Lycia, Asia Minor 20
Erroneous in the Latin sense of straying 31 Horace’s “content with few
readers” (*Sat.* I, x, 74) 32-33 a reference to the court of Charles II; cf. i, 498-502 34
Thracian bard Orpheus; see “Lycidas,” 58 ff. A proffered masque subject in *A
Midsummer Night’s Dream* (V, i, 48-49) was: “The riot of the tipsy
Bacchanals,/Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.”

To those apostates, lest the like befall
In Paradise to Adam or his race,
Charged not to touch the interdicted tree,
If they transgress, and slight that sole command,
So easily obeyed amid the choice
Of all tastes else to please their appetite,
Though wandering. He, with his consorted Eve,
The story heard attentive, and was filled
With admiration^o and deep muse, to hear
Of things so high and strange, things to their thought
So unimaginable as hate in Heaven,
And war so near the peace of God in bliss,
With such confusion; but the evil, soon
Driven back, redounded as a flood on those
From whom it sprung, impossible to mix
With blessedness. Whence Adam soon repealed^o
The doubts that in his heart arose; and, now
Led on, yet sinless, with desire to know
What nearer might concern him—how this World
Of heaven and earth conspicuous first began;
When, and whereof, created; for what cause;
What within Eden, or without, was done
Before his memory—as one whose drought,
Yet scarce allayed, still eyes the current stream,
Whose liquid murmur heard new thirst excites,
Proceeded thus to ask his heavenly guest:
‘Great things, and full of wonder in our ears,
Far differing from this World, thou hast revealed,
Divine interpreter, by favour sent
Down from the empyrean to forewarn
Us timely of what might else have been our loss,
Unknown, which human knowledge could not reach;
For which to the infinitely Good^o we owe
Immortal thanks, and his admonishment
Receive with solemn purpose to observe
Immutably his sovran will, the end
Of what we are. But, since thou hast vouchsafed
Gently for our instruction to impart

52 **admiration** wonder 59 **repealed** called back. The further predicate in the long
sentence that begins here is *Proceeded*, 69. 76 **infinitely Good** a tribute paid before,
iv, 414

Things above earthly thought, which yet concerned
Our knowing as to highest wisdom seemed,
Deign to descend now lower and relate

What may no less perhaps avail us known—
 How first began this Heaven which we behold
 Distant so high, with moving fires adorned
 Innumerable, and this which yields or fills
 All space, the ambient air, wide interfused,
 Embracing round this florid Earth; what cause
 Moved the Creator, in his holy rest^o
 Through all eternity, so late to build
 In Chaos, and, the work begun, how soon
 Absolved:^o if unforbid thou may'st unfold
 What we not to explore the secrets ask
 Of his eternal empire, but the more
 To magnify his works^o the more we know.
 And the great light of day yet wants to run
 Much of his race, though steep; suspense^o in Heaven,
 Held by thy voice, thy potent voice, he hears,
 And longer will delay, to hear thee tell
 His generation, and the rising birth
 Of Nature from the unapparent deep,^o
 Or, if the Star of Evening and the Moon
 Haste to thy audience, Night with her will bring
 Silence, and Sleep listening to thee will watch,
 Or we can bid his absence till thy song
 End, and dismiss thee ere the morning shine.^o
 Thus Adam his illustrious guest besought,
 And thus the godlike Angel answered mild:
 'This also thy request, with caution asked,
 Obtain; though to recount almighty works
 What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
 Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?
 Yet what thou canst attain, which best may serve
 To glorify the Maker, and infer^o
 Thee also happier; shall not be withheld

91 **holy rest** cf. vi, 272 94 **Absolved** finished 97 **magnify his works** another biblical
 echo, Job, xxxvi, 24 99 **suspense** suspended, as at ii, 418; vi, 580 103 **unapparent**
deep compare 233-34 108 **the morning shine** cf. v, 20 116 **infer** demonstrate, imply

Thy hearing, such commission from above
 I have received, to answer thy desire
 Of knowledge within bounds; beyond abstain
 To ask, nor let thine own inventions hope
 Things not revealed, which the invisible King,^o
 Only omniscient, hath suppressed in night,
 To none communicable in Earth or Heaven.
 Enough is left besides to search and know;
 But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less
 Her temperance over appetite to know
 In measure what the mind may well contain,
 Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
 Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.
 'Know then, that after Lucifer from Heaven^o
 (So call him, brighter once amidst the host
 Of Angels than that star the stars among)
 Fell with his flaming legions through the Deep
 Into his place, and the great Son returned
 Victorious with his Saints,^o the Omnipotent
 Eternal Father from his throne beheld
 Their multitude, and to his Son thus spake:
 ' "At least^o our envious foe hath failed, who thought
 All like himself rebellious, by whose aid
 This inaccessible high strength, the seat

Of Deity supreme, us dispossessed,
 He trusted to have seized, and into fraud
 Drew many whom their place knows here no more.^o
 Yet far the greater part have kept, I see,
 Their station;^o Heaven, yet populous, retains
 Number sufficient to possess her realms,
 Though wide, and this high temple to frequent
 With ministeries due and solemn rites.
 But, lest his heart exalt him in the harm
 Already done, to have dispeopled Heaven—
 My damage fondly^o deemed—I can repair
 That detriment, if such it be to lose

122 **the invisible King** “the King . . . invisible,” 1 Timothy, i, 17 131 ff. “How art thou fallen from Heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” (Is. xiv, 12) 136 **Saints** loyal angels 139 **At least** at last(?) 144 Job, vii, 10 145-46 **kept . . . Their station** “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation . . .” (Jude, 6) 152 **fondly** foolishly, deludedly

Self-lost, and in a moment will create
 Another world; out of one man a race
 Of men innumerable, there to dwell,
 Not here, till, by degrees of merit raised,
 They open to themselves at length the way
 Up hither, under long obedience tried,
 And Earth be changed to Heaven, and Heaven to Earth,
 One kingdom, joy and union without end.
 Meanwhile inhabit lax,^o ye Powers of Heaven,
 And thou, my Word, begotten Son,^o by thee
 This I perform: speak thou, and be it done:
 My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee^o
 I send along; ride forth, and bid the Deep
 Within appointed bounds be heaven and earth;
 Boundless the deep, because I am who fill
 Infinitude, nor vacuous the space,
 Though I, uncircumscribed, myself retire,
 And put not forth my goodness, which is free
 To act or not, Necessity and Chance
 Approach not me, and what I will is Fate.”
 ‘So spake the Almighty, and to what he spake
 His Word, the Filial Godhead,^o gave effect.
 Immediate are the acts of God, more swift
 Than time or motion, but to human ears
 Cannot without process of speech be told,
 So told as earthly notion can receive.
 Great triumph and rejoicing was in Heaven
 When such was heard declared the Almighty’s will.
 Glory they sung to the Most High, good-will
 To future men, and in their dwellings, peace,
 Glory to him whose just avenging ire
 Had driven out the ungodly from his sight
 And the habitations of the just; to him
 Glory and praise whose wisdom had ordained
 Good out of evil^o to create, instead
 Of Spirits malign, a better race to bring

162 **inhabit lax** spread out widely, dwell at ease (in area one third less populous because of the revolt) 163 **begotten Son** cf. iii, 80, 384; v, 835. 165 “The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee” (Luke, i, 35). 175 **the Filial Godhead** cf. vi, 722 188 **Good out of evil** cf. i, 163; xii, 470

Into their vacant room^o and thence diffuse
 His good to worlds and ages infinite.
 'So sang the Hierarchies. Meanwhile the Son
 On his great expedition now appeared,
 Girt with omnipotence, with radiance crowned
 Of majesty divine, sapience and love
 Immense, and all his Father in him shone. ^o
 About his chariot numberless were poured
 Cherub and Seraph,^o Potentates and Thrones,
 And Virtues, winged Spirits, and chariots winged
 From the armoury of God,^o where stand of old
 Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged
 Against^o a solemn day, harnessed at hand,
 Celestial equipage, and now came forth
 Spontaneous, for within them Spirit lived,
 Attendant on their Lord. Heaven opened wide
 Her ever-during gates, harmonious sound
 On golden hinges moving,^o to let forth
 The King of Glory,^o in his powerful Word
 And Spirit coming to create new worlds.
 On heavenly ground they stood, and from the shore
 They viewed the vast immeasurable abyss,
 Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,^o
 Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
 And surging waves, as mountains to assault
 Heaven's height, and with the centre mix the pole.
 "Silence, ye troubled waves, and thou keep peace!"
 Said then the omnific^o Word: "your discord end!"
 Nor stayed, but, on the wings of Cherubim
 Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
 Far into Chaos and the World unborn,
 For Chaos heard his voice; him all his train
 Followed in bright procession, to behold

190 **vacant room** cf. ii, 835 196 cf. iii, 139. 198 **Cherub and Seraph** cf. i, 324 200
From the armoury of God cf. vi, 321 202 **Against** in readiness for 207 **moving**
 "might be a transitive participle agreeing with gates and governing *sound*; or again
 the whole phrase from *harmonious* to *moving* might be an ablative absolute,"
 observes C. S. Lewis, finding the syntactic ambiguity characteristic and profitable;
 cf. v, 253-55. 208 **King of Glory** Psalm xxiv, 8 212 **dark, wasteful, wild** cf. i, 60; ii,
 588; iii, 424 217 **omnific** all-creating (Latin)

Creation, and the wonders of his might.
 Then stayed the fervid^o wheels, and in his hand
 He took the golden compasses, prepared^o
 In God's eternal store, to circumscribe
 This Universe, and all created things.
 One foot he centred and the other turned
 Round through the vast profundity obscure,
 And said, "Thus far extend, thus far thy bounds;
 This be thy just circumference, O World."
 Thus God the Heaven created, thus the Earth,
 Matter unformed and void. Darkness profound
 Covered the abyss, but on the watery calm^o
 His brooding wings the Spirit of God outspread,
 And vital virtue infused, and vital warmth,
 Throughout the fluid mass, but downward purged
 The black, tartareous, cold, infernal dregs,
 Adverse to life; then founded, then conglobed
 Like things to like, the rest to several place
 Disparted, and between spun out the air,

And Earth, self-balanced, on her centre hung.
 ‘“Let there be light,said God, and forthwith light
 Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
 Sprung from the deep, and from her native East
 To journey through the aery gloom began,
 Sphered in a radiant cloud, for yet the Sun
 Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle°
 Sojourned the while. God saw the light was good,
 And light from darkness by the hemisphere
 Divided: light the Day, and darkness Night,
 He named. Thus was the first day even and morn;
 Nor passed uncelebrated, nor unsung
 By the celestial choirs, when orient light
 Exhaling first from darkness they beheld,
 Birth-day of Heaven and Earth. With joy and shout°
 The hollow universal orb they filled,

224 **fervid** glowing (“*fervidis . . . rotis*” being found in Horace) 225 ff. see Proverbs, viii, 27 and Dante’s *Paradiso*, XIX, 40—42 234—37 cf. i, 19-22 248 **cloudy tabernacle** cf. Psalm xix, 4, and “cloudy shrine,” 360 256 “When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?” (Job, xxxviii, 7)

And touched their golden harps,° and hymning praised
 God and his works; Creator him they sung,
 Both when first evening was, and when first morn.
 ‘Again God said, “Let there be firmament
 Amid the waters, and let it divide
 The waters from the waters.” And God made
 The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
 Transparent, elemental air, diffused
 In circuit to the uttermost convex
 Of this great round: partition firm and sure,
 The waters underneath from those above
 Dividing, for, as Earth, so he the World
 Built on circumfluous waters calm, in wide
 Crystalline ocean, and the loud misrule
 Of Chaos far removed, lest fierce extremes°
 Contiguous might distemper the whole frame,
 And Heaven he named the Firmament. So even
 And morning chorus sung the second day.

‘The Earth was formed, but, in the womb as yet
 Of waters, embryon immature, involved,°
 Appeared not; over all the face of Earth
 Main ocean flowed, not idle, but, with warm
 Prolific humour softening all her globe,
 Fermented the great mother° to conceive,
 Sate with genial° moisture; when God said,
 “Be gathered now, ye waters under Heaven,
 Into one place, and let dry land appear.”
 Immediately the mountains huge appear
 Emergent, and their broad bare backs upheave
 Into the clouds; their tops ascend the sky.°
 So high as heaved the tumid hills, so low
 Down sunk a hollow bottom° broad and deep,
 Capacious bed of waters: thither they
 Hasted with glad precipitance, unrolled,
 As drops on dust conglobing, from the dry;
 Part rise in crystal wall, or ridge direct,

258 **their golden harps** cf. iii, 365 272 **fierce extremes** cf. ii, 599 277 **involved** wrapped 281 **the great mother** earth 282 **genial** procreative 285-87 Compare the animation in Milton’s translation (at age fifteen) of Psalm cxiv: “The high,

hugebellied mountains skip like rams.” 289 **bottom** valley

For haste, such flight the great command impressed
On the swift floods. As armies at the call
Of trumpet (for of armies thou hast heard)
Troop to their standard, so the watery throng,
Wave rolling after wave, where way they found—
If steep, with torrent rapture, if through plain,
Soft-ebbing; nor withstood them rock or hill;
But they, or underground or circuit wide
With serpent^o error^o wandering, found their way,
And on the washy ooze deep channels wore:
Easy, ere God had bid the ground be dry,
All but within those banks where rivers now
Stream, and perpetual draw their humid train.^o
The dry land Earth, and the great receptacle
Of congregated waters he called Seas:
And saw that it was good, and said “Let the Earth
Put forth the verdant grass, herb yielding seed,
And fruit-tree yielding fruit after her kind,
Whose seed is in herself upon the Earth.”
He scarce had said when the bare Earth, till then
Desert and bare, unsightly, unadorned,
Brought forth the tender grass, whose verdure clad
Her universal face with pleasant green;
Then herbs of every leaf, that sudden flowered,
Opening their various colours, and made gay
Her bosom, smelling sweet; and, these scarce blown,
Forth flourished thick the clustering vine, forth crept
The smelling^o gourd, up stood the corn reed
Embattled in her field; add^o the humble^o shrub,
And bush with frizzled hair implicit;^o last
Rose, as in dance, the stately trees and spread
Their branches, hung with copious fruit, or gemmed^o
Their blossoms; with high woods the hills were crowned,

302 **serpent** serpentine **error** again the Latin use, as at 20 and iv, 239 306 The line itself illustrates the slow process. 321 **smelling** Emended by Bentley to swelling, but “smelling sweet” occurs two lines above, and G. McColley notes, “We have . . . a pungently smelling gourd in the East Indian pepper of Du Bartas.” 322 **add and**, 1674 **humble** Latin *humilis*, low (-growing). 323 **frizzled hair implicit** curled foliage (Latin *coma*=both hair of the head and leaves) entangled. 325 **gemmed** inspired by Latin *gemma*, a bud

With tufts the valleys and each fountain-side,
With borders long the rivers; that Earth now
Seemed like to Heaven, a seat where gods might dwell,
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt
Her sacred shades; though God had yet not rained
Upon the Earth, and man to till the ground
None was, but from the Earth a dewy mist
Went up and watered all the ground, and each
Plant of the field, which ere it was in the Earth
God made, and every herb before it grew
On the green stem. God saw that it was good;
So even and morn recorded the third day.
‘Again the Almighty spake, “Let there be lights
High in the expanse of Heaven, to divide
The day from night; and let them be for signs,
For seasons, and for days, and circling years;
And let them be for lights, as I ordain

Their office in the firmament of Heaven,
 To give light on the Earth,” and it was so.
 And God made two great lights,^o great for their use
 To man, the greater to have rule by day,
 The less by night, altern; and made the Stars,
 And set them in the firmament of Heaven
 To illuminate the Earth, and rule the day
 In their vicissitude, and rule the night,
 And light from darkness^o to divide. God saw,
 Surveying his great work, that it was good,^o
 For, of celestial bodies, first the Sun
 A mighty sphere he framed, unlightsome first,
 Though of ethereal mould;^o then formed the Moon
 Globose, and every magnitude of Stars,
 And sowed with stars the Heaven thick as a field.
 Of light by far the greater part he took,
 Transplanted from her cloudy shrine, and placed
 In the Sun’s orb, made porous to receive
 And drink the liquid light, firm to retain

346 **And God made two great lights** Milton, of course, is following the Bible closely; this, for instance, is literally the King James Version, Genesis i, 16. 352 **And light from darkness** Line 250 starts the same way. 352—53 **God saw . . . that it was good** cf. 337; also 249, 395 356 **ethereal mould** cf. ii, 139; vi, 473

Her gathered beams, great palace now of light
 Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
 Repairing, in their golden urns draw light,
 And hence the morning planet^o gilds her^o horns;
 By tincture or reflection they augment
 Their small peculiar,^o though, from human sight
 So far remote, with diminution seen.
 First in his east the glorious lamp was seen,
 Regent of day, and all the horizon round
 Invested with bright rays, jocund to run
 His longitude through Heaven’s high road; the grey
 Dawn, and the Pleiades,^o before him danced,
 Shedding sweet influence. Less bright the Moon
 But opposite in levelled^o west was set
 His mirror, with full face borrowing her light^o
 From him, for other light she needed none
 In that aspect, and still that distance keeps
 Till night; then in the east her turn she shines,
 Revolved on Heaven’s great axle, and her reign
 With thousand lesser lights dividual^o holds,
 With thousand thousand^o stars, that then appeared
 Spangling the hemisphere; then first adorned
 With their bright luminaries, that set and rose,
 Glad evening and glad morn crowned the fourth day.

‘And God said, “Let the waters generate
 Reptile^o with spawn abundant, living soul;
 And let Fowl fly above the earth, with wings
 Displayed on the open firmament of Heaven.”’^o
 And God created the great whales, and each
 Soul living, each that crept, which plenteously
 The waters generated by their kinds,

366 **the morning planet** Venus, which, as Hesperus, is “the Star of Evening” (104) **her** is superior to the 1667 reading, *his*. 368 **peculiar** store 374 **Pleiades** the seven daughters of Atlas transformed into a group of stars, in the constellation Taurus. 374-75 echo “the sweet influences of Pleiades” (Job, xxxviii, 31). 376 **levelled** due 377 **borrowing her light** cf. iii, 730 382 **dividual** shared in common (modifies “reign,”

381) 383 **thousand thousand** cf. v, 588 388 **Reptile** whatever creeps (cf. 392), reptilia, including fishes. Notice how much more Milton is interested in the birds than in the fishes. 390 cf. 344, 349

And every bird of wing after his kind,
 And saw that it was good, and blessed them, saying,
 "Be fruitful, multiply, and, in the seas,
 And lakes, and running streams, the waters fill;
 And let the fowl be multiplied on the earth."
 Forthwith the sounds and seas, each creek and bay,
 With fry innumerable swarm, and shoals
 Of fish that, with their fins and shining scales,
 Glide under the green wave in schools^o that oft
 Bank the mid-sea. Part, single or with mate,
 Graze the sea-weed, their pasture, and through groves
 Of coral stray, or, sporting with quick glance,
 Show to the sun their waved coats dropped with gold,
 Or, in their pearly shells at ease, attend
 Moist nutriment, or under rocks their food
 In jointed armour watch; on smooth^o the seal
 And bended dolphins^o play, part, huge of bulk,
 Wallowing unwieldy, enormous in their gait,
 Tempest the ocean. There leviathan,^o
 Hugest of living creatures, on the deep
 Stretched like a promontory, sleeps or swims,
 And seems a moving land, and at his gills
 Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.
 Meanwhile the tepid caves, and fens, and shores,
 Their brood as numerous hatch, from the egg that soon,
 Bursting with kindly rupture, forth disclosed
 Their callow young; but feathered soon and fledge,
 They summed their pens,^o and, soaring the air sublime,^o
 With clang^o despised the ground, under a cloud
 In prospect. There the eagle and the stork
 On cliffs and cedar-tops their eyries build.
 Part loosely^o wing the region; part, more wise,
 In common, ranged in figure, wedge their way,
 Intelligent of seasons, and set forth
 Their aery caravan, high over seas
 Flying, and over lands with mutual wing

402 **schools** printed *sculls* 409 **smooth** i.e., sea (Latin *aequor*) 410 **bended dolphins**
 The adjective was suggested by Ovid (*Fasti*, II, 113); the fish meant is the porpoise.
 412 **leviathan** the whale, as at i, 201 421 **summed their pens** developed to full
 growth the wings **the air sublime** as at ii, 528; iii, 72 422 **clang** cf. xi, 835 425
loosely separately

Easing their flight; so steers the prudent crane
 Her annual voyage, borne on winds; the air
 Floats as they pass, fanned with unnumbered plumes.
 From branch to branch the smaller birds with song
 Solaced the woods, and spread their painted wings,
 Till even; nor then the solemn nightingale
 Ceased warbling, but all night tuned her soft lays.
 Others on silver lakes and rivers bathed
 Their downy breast; the swan, with arched neck
 Between her white wings mantling^o proudly, rows
 Her state with oary feet; yet oft they quit
 The dank,^o and, rising on stiff pennons,^o tower
 The mid aerial sky. Others on ground
 Walked firm^o—the crested cock, whose clarion sounds

The silent hours, and the other, whose gay train
Adorns him, coloured with the florid hue
Of rainbows and starry eyes. The waters thus
With Fish replenish, and the air with Fowl,
Evening and morn solemnized the fifth day.

‘The sixth, and of Creation last, arose
With evening harps and matin; when God said,
“Let the Earth bring forth soul^o living in her kind,
Cattle, and creeping things, and beast of the earth,
Each in their kind.” The Earth obeyed, and, straight
Opening her fertile womb, teemed at a birth
Innumerable living creatures, perfect forms,
Limbed and full grown. Out of the ground uprose,
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons^o
In forest wild, in thicket, brake, or den—
Among the trees in pairs they rose, they walked;
The cattle in the fields and meadows green:
Those rare and solitary, these in flocks
Pasturing at once, and in broad herds,^o upsprung.
The grassy clods now calved; now half appeared
The tawny lion, pawing to get free
His hinder parts, then springs, as broke from bonds,

439 **mantling** see above, v, 279 441 **dank** water **pennons** pinions 442-43
ground . . . firm terra firma, vi, 242, though the first thought is the adverbial sense
451 soul Bentley’s emendation of *Fowle* 457 **wons** dwells (German *wohnen*) 462
broad herds from *Iliad*, XI, 679

And rampant^o shakes his brinded^o mane; the ounce,^o
The libbard,^o and the tiger, as the mole
Rising, the crumbled earth above them threw
In hillocks; the swift stag from underground
Bore up his branching head; scarce from his mould
Behemoth,^o biggest born of earth, upheaved
His vastness; fleeced the flocks and bleating rose,
As plants; ambiguous between sea and land,
The river-horse^o and scaly crocodile.
At once came forth whatever creeps the ground,
Insect or worm.^o Those waved their limber fans^o
For wings, and smallest lineaments^o exact
In all the liveries decked of summer’s pride,
With spots of gold and purple, azure and green;
These as a line their long dimension drew^o
Streaking the ground with sinuous trace; not all
Minims^o of nature; some of serpent kind,
Wondrous in length and corpulence, involved^o
Their snaky folds, and added wings. First crept
The parsimonious emmet,^o provident
Of future, in small room large heart enclosed—
Pattern of just equality perhaps
Hereafter—joined in her popular tribes
Of commonalty. Swarming next appeared
The female bee, that feeds her husband drone^o
Deliciously, and builds her waxen cells
With honey stored. The rest are numberless,
And thou their natures know’st, and gav’st them names,
Needless to thee repeated; nor unknown
The serpent, subtlest beast of all the field,
Of huge extent sometimes, with brazen eyes
And hairy mane^o terrific, though to thee

466 **rampant** rearing **brinded** streaked **ounce** lynx 467 **libbard** leopard 471 **Behemoth** the elephant 474 **The river-horse** Milton translates Greek *hippopotamus* into English. 476 **Insect or worm** cf. iv, 704; *worm* includes serpents **timber fans** flexible wings 477 **lineaments** cf. v, 278 480 This even sounds like a line about snakes. 482 **Minims** tiniest creatures 483 **involved** wound 485 **emmet** ant 490 The poet, perhaps thinking of wifely duties, has neglected the fact that the working bees are *males*; the “husband drone” is the queen bee. 497 Right down to the *mane* or crest Milton would seem to be thinking of the species that crushed Laocoön and his sons (*Aen.* II, 203 ff.).

Not noxious, but obedient at thy call.^o

‘Now Heaven in all her glory shone, and rolled
Her motions, as the great First Mover’s hand
First wheeled their course; Earth, in her rich attire
Consummate lovely smiled; air, water, earth,
By fowl, fish, beast, was flown, was swum, was walked,
Frequent;^o and of the sixth day yet remained;
There wanted yet the master-work, the end^o
Of all yet done—a creature who, not prone
And brute as other creatures, but endued
With sanctity of reason, might erect
His stature, and upright with front^o serene
Govern the rest, self-knowing, and from thence
Magnanimous^o to correspond with Heaven,
But grateful to acknowledge whence his good
Descends; thither with heart, and voice, and eyes
Directed in devotion, to adore
And worship God Supreme, who made him chief
Of all his works. Therefore the Omnipotent
Eternal Father^o (for where is not he
Present?) thus to his Son audibly spake:

“Let us make now Man in our image, Man
In our similitude, and let them rule
Over the fish and fowl of sea and air,
Beast of the field, and over all the earth,
And every creeping thing^o that creeps the ground.”
This said, he formed thee, Adam, thee, O Man,
Dust of the ground, and in thy nostrils breathed
The breath of life; in his own image he
Created thee, in the image of God
Express,^o and thou becam’st a living soul.
Male he created thee, but thy consort
Female, for race; then blessed mankind, and said:
“Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the Earth;^o
Subdue it, and throughout dominion hold
Over fish of the sea, and fowl of the air,

497-98 constitute dramatic irony. 504 **Frequent** thronged 505 **end** in the sense of both object and conclusion 509 **front** brow 511 **Magnanimous** great-minded 516-17 **the Omnipotent /Eternal Father** as at 136—37 523 **creeping thing** cf. 452 528 **Express** “the express image of his person,” Hebrews, i, 3 531 Partly echoing 396, partly iv, 733.

And every living thing that moves on the Earth.”
Wherever thus created—for no place
Is yet distinct by name—thence, as thou know’st,
He brought thee into this delicious grove,
This garden, planted with the trees of God,
Delectable both to behold and taste,
And freely all their pleasant fruit for food
Gave thee. All sorts are here that all the earth yields,

Variety without end; but of the tree
 Which, tasted, works knowledge of good and evil
 Thou may'st not; in the day thou eat'st thou diest.
 Death is the penalty imposed; beware,
 And govern well thy appetite, lest Sin
 Surprise thee, and her black attendant, Death.
 'Here finished he, and all that he had made
 Viewed, and, behold! all was entirely good.
 So even and morn^o accomplished the sixth day;
 Yet not till the Creator, from his work
 Desisting, though unwearied, up returned,
 Up to the Heaven of Heavens,^o his high abode,
 Thence to behold this new-created World,
 The addition of his empire, how it showed
 In prospect from his throne, how good, how fair,
 Answering his great idea.^o Up he rode,
 Followed with acclamation, and the sound
 Symphonious of ten thousand harps that tuned
 Angelic harmonies: the earth, the air
 Resounded (thou remember'st, for thou heard'st),
 The Heavens and all the constellations rung,
 The planets in their stations listening stood
 While the bright pomp ascended jubilant.
 "Open, ye everlasting gates," they sung;
 "Open, ye Heavens, your living doors; let in
 The great Creator,^o from his work returned
 Magnificent, his six days' work, a World;
 Open, and henceforth oft, for God will deign
 To visit oft the dwellings of just men

550 **even and morn** as at 252, 338 553 **to the Heaven of Heavens** cf. 13 557 **idea**
 conception 567 Doubling back on 551-52. *The great Creator* is one of the poem's
 fixed epithets—ii, 385; iii, 167, 673; iv, 684.

Delighted, and with frequent intercourse
 Thither will send his winged messengers
 On errands of supernal grace." So sung
 The glorious train ascending; he through Heaven,
 That opened wide her blazing portals, led
 To God's eternal house direct the way,
 A broad and ample road, whose dust is gold,
 And pavement stars, as stars to thee appear
 Seen in the galaxy, that milky way
 Which nightly as a circling zone thou seest
 Powdered with stars. And now on Earth the seventh
 Evening arose in Eden, for the sun
 Was set, and twilight from the east came on,
 Forerunning night, when at the holy mount^o
 Of Heaven's high-seated top, the imperial throne
 Of Godhead, fixed forever firm and sure,
 The Filial Power arrived, and sat him down
 With his great Father; for he also went
 Invisible, yet stayed (such privilege
 Hath Omnipresence) and the work ordained,
 Author and end of all things, and, from work
 Now resting, blessed and hallowed the seventh day,
 As resting on that day from all his work;
 But not in silence holy kept; the harp
 Had work, and rested not; the solemn pipe
 And dulcimer,^o all organs of sweet stop,
 All sounds on fret by string or golden wire,
 Tempered soft tunings, intermixed with voice

Choral or unison;° of incense clouds,
 Fuming from golden censers, hid the Mount.°
 Creation and the six days' acts they sung:
 "Great are thy works, Jehovah, infinite
 Thy power, what thought can measure thee, or tongue
 Relate thee; greater now in thy return
 Than from the giant-angels; thee that day
 Thy thunders magnified; but to create

584 **holy mount** cf. v, 712; vi, 743 596 **dulcimer** stringed instrument mentioned in
 Daniel, iii, 5, 10, 15 599 **unison** solo 599-600 Revelation viii, 3—4

Is greater than created° to destroy.
 Who can impair thee, mighty King, or bound
 Thy empire? easily the proud attempt
 Of Spirits apostate and their counsels vain
 Thou hast repelled, while impiously they thought
 Thee to diminish, and from thee withdraw
 The number of thy worshippers. Who seeks
 To lessen thee against his purpose serves
 To manifest the more thy might; his evil
 Thou usest, and from thence creat'st more good.
 Witness this new-made World, another Heaven
 From Heaven-gate not far, founded in view
 On the clear hyaline,° the glassy sea;
 Of amplitude almost immense, with stars
 Numerous, and every star perhaps a world
 Of destined habitation; but thou know'st°
 Their seasons; among these the seat of men,°
 Earth, with her nether ocean circumfused,
 Their pleasant dwelling-place. Thrice happy men,
 And sons of men, whom God hath thus advanced,
 Created in his image, there to dwell
 And worship him, and in reward to rule
 Over his works, on earth, in sea, or air,
 And multiply a race of worshippers
 Holy and just; thrice happy, if they know
 Their happiness, and persevere upright."
 'So sung they, and the Empyrean rung
 With halleluiahs: thus was Sabbath kept.
 And thy request think now fulfilled, that asked
 How first this World and face of things began,
 And what before thy memory was done
 From the beginning, that posterity,
 Informed by thee, might know; if else thou seek'st
 Aught, not surpassing human measure, say.'

607 **created** object of to *destroy* 619 **hyaline** "the glassy sea" (cf. Rev. iv, 6; xv, 2)
 621-22 It is apparent that the theory of the plurality of worlds was not thought
 incompatible with Christianity; cf. viii, 145, 153-58. 623 **the seat of men** cf. iii, 724

BOOK VIII

THE ARGUMENT

Adam inquires concerning celestial motions, is doubtfully answered, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledge. Adam assents, and, still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remembered since his own creation: his placing in Paradise; his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society; his first meeting and nuptials with Eve. His discourse with the Angel thereupon; who, after admonitions repeated, departs.

THE Angel ended, and in Adam's ear
So charming left his voice that he a while
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixed to hear;
Then, as new-waked, thus gratefully replied:°
'What thanks sufficient, or what recompense
Equal, have I to render thee, divine
Historian, who thus largely hast allayed
The thirst I had of knowledge, and vouchsafed
This friendly condescension to relate
Things else by me unsearchable, now heard
With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,
With glory attributed to the high
Creator? Something yet of doubt remains,
Which only thy solution can resolve.
When I behold this goodly frame,° this World,
Of Heaven and Earth consisting, and compute
Their magnitudes—this Earth, a spot, a grain,
An atom, with the firmament compared
And all her numbered stars, that seem to roll°
Spaces incomprehensible (for such

1—4 Added in second edition, 1674, when Books VII and X of 1667 were split to increase the poem from ten books to twelve. 15 **this goodly frame** a phrase of Hamlet's (II, ii, 316) 19-38 cf. ix, 103-07

Their distance argues, and their swift return
Diurnal) merely to officiate° light
Round this opacous° Earth, this punctual° spot,
One day and night, in all their vast survey
Useless besides, reasoning, I oft admire°
How Nature, wise and frugal, could commit
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
So many nobler bodies to create,
Greater so manifold, to this one use,
For aught appears, and on their orbs impose
Such restless revolution day by day
Repeated, while the sedentary° Earth,
That better might with far less compass move,
Served by more noble than herself, attains
Her end without least motion, and receives,
As tribute, such a sumless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light—
Speed, to describe whose swiftness number fails.'

So spake our Sire, and by his countenance seemed
Entering on studious thoughts abstruse; which Eve
Perceiving, where she sat retired in sight,
With lowliness majestic from her seat,
And grace that won who saw to wish her stay,

Rose, and went forth among her fruits and flowers,
 To visit how they prospered, bud and bloom,
 Her nursery; they at her coming sprung,
 And, touched by her fair tendance, gladlier grew.
 Yet went she not as not with such discourse
 Delighted, or not capable her ear
 Of what was high; such pleasure she reserved,
 Adam relating, she sole auditress;
 Her husband the relater she preferred
 Before the Angel, and of him to ask
 Chose rather; he, she knew, would intermix
 Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute
 With conjugal caresses: from his lip

22 **officiate** supply 23 **opacous** dark, as at iii, 418 **punctual** like a point 25 **admire**
 wonder 32 **the sedentary** the stationary earth of the Ptolemaic system. Milton is
 bringing his poem (which touches on all major knowledge) up to date by leaving
 room for the possibility that the Copernican theory is right.

Not words alone pleased her. Oh, when meet now
 Such pairs, in love and mutual honour joined?
 With goddesslike demeanour forth she went,
 Not unattended for on her as queen
 A pomp^o of winning Graces waited still,
 And from about her shot darts of desire
 Into all eyes, to wish her still in sight.
 And Raphael now to Adam's doubt proposed
 Benevolent and facile thus replied:

'To ask or search I blame thee not; for Heaven
 Is as the Book of God before thee set,
 Wherein to read his wondrous works,^o and learn
 His seasons, hours, or days, or months, or years.
 This to attain, whether Heaven move or Earth
 Imports not, if thou reckon right; the rest
 From Man or Angel the great Architect
 Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
 His secrets, to be scanned by them who ought
 Rather admire. Or, if they list to try
 Conjecture, he his fabric of the Heavens
 Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
 His laughter at their quaint opinions wide^o
 Hereafter, when they come to model Heaven,
 And calculate the stars; how they will wield
 The mighty frame; how build, unbuild, contrive
 To save appearances; how gird the sphere
 With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,
 Cycle and epicycle,^o orb in orb.
 Already by thy reasoning this I guess,
 Who art to lead thy offspring, and supposest
 That bodies bright and greater should not serve
 The less not bright, nor Heaven such journeys run,

61 **pomp** train or procession, as at vii, 564. 68 **his wondrous works** cf. iii, 663, 665
 78 **wide** (of the mark) 84 **epicycle** a small circle with its center on the circumference
 of a greater circle. Ptolemaic "theories set out from the simple conception of a planet
 uniformly describing a circle with the Earth at the center, and then refined upon it by
 displacing the center of the circle from the Earth, referring the uniform motion to an
 arbitrarily chosen point within the circle, regarding the moving point on the circle as
 merely the center of a smaller circle in which the planet actually revolved, and so
 forth" (A. Wolf).

Earth sitting still, when she alone receives

The benefit: consider, first, that great
 Or bright infers not excellence: the Earth,
 Though, in comparison of Heaven, so small,
 Nor glistening, may of solid good contain
 More plenty than the Sun that barren shines,
 Whose virtue on itself works no effect.
 But in the fruitful Earth; there first received,
 His beams, unactive else, their vigour find.
 Yet not to Earth are those bright luminaries^o
 Officious,^o but to thee, Earth's habitant.
 And, for the Heaven's wide circuit, let it speak
 The Maker's high magnificence, who built
 So spacious, and his line stretched out so far,^o
 That Man may know he dwells not in his own—
 An edifice too large for him to fill,
 Lodged in a small partition, and the rest
 Ordained for uses to his Lord best known.
 The swiftness of those circles átttribute,
 Though numberless, to his omnipotence,
 That to corporeal substances could add
 Speed almost spiritual. Me thou think'st not slow,
 Who since the morning-hour set out from Heaven
 Where God resides, and ere midday arrived
 In Eden, distance inexpressible
 By numbers that have name. But this I urge,
 Admitting motion in the Heavens, to show
 Invalid that which thee to doubt it moved;
 Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
 To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.
 God, to remove his ways from human sense,
 Placed Heaven from Earth so far that earthly sight,
 If it presume, might err in things too high,
 And no advantage gain. What if the Sun^o
 Be centre to the World, and other stars,
 By his attractive virtue^o and their own
 Incited, dance about him various rounds?

98 **bright luminaries** cf. vii, 385 99 **Officious** ministering 102 "Who hath laid the
 measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it [the
 Earth]?" (Job, xxxviii, 5) 122-30 the Copernican theory 124 **attractive virtue** power
 of attraction

Their wandering course, now high, now low, then hid,
 Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
 In six^o thou seest; and what if, seventh to these,
 The planet Earth, so steadfast though she seem,
 Insensibly three different motions move?
 Which else^o to several spheres thou must ascribe,
 Moved contrary with thwart^o obliquities,
 Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift
 Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb^o supposed,
 Invisible else above all stars, the wheel
 Of Day and Night; which needs not thy belief,
 If Earth, industrious of herself, fetch Day,^o
 Travelling east, and with her part averse
 From the Sun's beam meet Night, her other part
 Still luminous by his ray. What if that light,
 Sent from her through the wide transpicious air,
 To the terrestrial Moon be as a star,
 Enlightening her^o by day, as she by night
 This Earth—reciprocal,^o if land be there,
 Fields and inhabitants? Her spots thou seest

As clouds, and clouds may rain, and rain produce
 Fruits in her softened soil, for some to eat
 Allotted there; and other Suns, perhaps,
 With their attendant Moons, thou wilt descry,
 Communicating male and female light,
 Which two great sexes animate the World,
 Stored in each orb perhaps with some that live.
 For such vast room in Nature unpossessed
 By living soul,^o desert and desolate,
 Only to shine, yet scarce to contribute
 Each orb a glimpse of light, conveyed so far
 Down to this habitable,^o which returns
 Light back to them, is obvious^o to dispute.
 But whether thus these things, or whether not—

128 **six** planets. The “seventh” is the sun by the old system, the Earth by the new.
 131 **else** either 132 **thwart** transverse 134 **Nocturnal and diurnal rhomb** the night-
 and-day evolving wheel (Greek *rombos*), the Primum Mobile 137 If the Earth,
 moving, obtains light for herself (from the sun)—. 143 **her** the moon 144 **reciprocal**
 i.e., service 154 **living soul** cf. v, 197; vii, 388, 528 157 **this habitable** a Greek
 idiom for the Earth 158 **obvious** open

Whether the Sun, predominant in heaven,
 Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun;
 He from the east his flaming road begin,
 Or she from west her silent course advance
 With inoffensive^o pace that spinning sleeps
 On her soft axle, while she paces even,
 And bears thee soft with the smooth air along—
 Solicit not thy thoughts with matters hid:
 Leave them to God above; him serve and fear.
 Of other creatures as him pleases best,
 Wherever placed, let him dispose; joy thou
 In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
 And thy fair Eve;^o Heaven is for thee too high^o
 To know what passes there. Be lowly wise;
 Think only what concerns thee and thy being;
 Dream not of other worlds, what creatures there
 Live, in what state, condition, or degree,
 Contented that thus far hath been revealed
 Not of Earth only, but of highest Heaven.’

To whom thus Adam, cleared of doubt, replied:
 ‘How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure
 Intelligence of Heaven, Angel serene,
 And, freed from intricacies, taught to live
 The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts^o
 To interrupt the sweet of life, from which
 God hath bid dwell far off all anxious cares,
 And not molest us, unless we ourselves
 Seek them with wandering thoughts, and notions vain!
 But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
 Unchecked,^o and of her roving is no end,
 Till, warned, or by experience taught, she learn
 That not to know at large of things remote
 From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
 That which before us lies in daily life,
 Is the prime wisdom: what is more is fume,^o
 Or emptiness, or fond impertinence,^o

164 **inoffensive** meeting with no obstacle, unimpeded 172 **fair Eve** cf. iv, 481 **too**
high a pun 183 cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 302—06 188—89 Idle philosophizing was an
 occupation of the devils in Hell, ii, 561. 194 **fume** vapor (whence vapid), smoke 195

fond impertinence foolish irrelevance

And renders us in things that most concern
Unpractised, unprepared, and still to seek.
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
Useful; whence, haply, mention may arise
Of something not unseasonable to ask,
By sufferance, and thy wonted favour, deigned.
Thee I have heard relating what was done
Ere my remembrance; now hear me relate
My story, which, perhaps, thou hast not heard;
And day is yet not spent; till then thou seest
How subtly to detain thee I devise,
Inviting thee to hear while I relate—
Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply.
For while I sit with thee I seem in Heaven,
And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
Than fruits of palm-tree, pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labour, at the hour
Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,
Though pleasant, but thy words, with grace divine
Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety.’

To whom thus Raphael answered, heavenly meek:
‘Nor are thy lips ungraceful,^o Sire of Men,
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also poured,
Inward and outward both, his image fair:
Speaking or mute all comeliness and grace
Attends thee, and each word, each motion, forms.
Nor less think we in Heaven of thee on Earth
Than of our fellow-servant, and inquire
Gladly into the ways of God with Man;^o
For God, we see, hath honoured thee, and set
On Man his equal love. Say therefore on,
For I that day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure,
Far on excursion toward the gates of Hell,
Squared in full legion (such command we had),
To see that none thence issued forth a spy
Or enemy, while God was in his work,

218 “Full of grace are thy lips” (Ps. xlv, 2, Prayer Book version). 226 cf. i, 26

Lest he, incensed at such eruption bold,
Destruction with Creation might have mixed.
Not that they durst without his leave attempt;
But us he sends upon his high behests^o
For state, as sovran King, and to inure^o
Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut,
The dismal gates, and barricadoed strong;
But, long ere our approaching, heard within
Noise, other than the sound of dance or song,
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.
Glad we returned up to the coasts of Light
Ere Sabbath-evening; so we had in charge.
But thy relation now; for I attend,
Pleased with thy words no less than thou with mine.’

So spake the godlike Power, and thus our Sire:
‘For Man to tell how human life began
Is hard: for who himself beginning knew?

Desire with thee still longer to converse
 Induced me. As new-waked from soundest sleep,
 Soft on the flowery herb I found me laid,
 In balmy sweat, which with his beams the Sun
 Soon dried, and on the reeking moisture fed.
 Straight toward Heaven my wondering eyes I turned,
 And gazed a while the ample sky, till, raised
 By quick instinctive motion, up I sprung,
 As thitherward endeavouring, and upright
 Stood on my feet. About me round I saw
 Hill, dale, and shady woods, and sunny plains,
 And liquid lapse^o of murmuring streams; by these,
 Creatures that lived and moved, and walked or flew,
 Birds on the branches warbling: all things smiled;
 With fragrance and with joy my heart o'erflowed.
 Myself I then perused, and limb by limb
 Surveyed, and sometimes went,^o and sometimes ran
 With supple joints, as^o lively vigour led;
 But who I was, or where, or from what cause,
 Knew not. To speak I tried, and forthwith spake;
 My tongue obeyed, and readily could name
 Whate'er I saw. "Thou Sun," said I, "fair light,

238 **high behests** cf. iii, 533 239 **inure** accustom 263 **lapse** pun on (1) lappings and
 (2) Latin sense of slipping past, a flowing 268 **went** walked 269 **as and**, 1674

And thou enlightened Earth,^o so fresh and gay,
 Ye hills and dales, ye rivers, woods, and plains,
 And ye that live and move, fair creatures,^o tell,
 Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?
 Not of myself; by some great Maker^o then,
 In goodness and in power pre-eminent.
 Tell me, how may I know him, how adore,
 From whom I have that thus I move and live,^o
 And feel that I am happier than I know?"
 While thus I called, and strayed I knew not whither,
 From where I first drew air, and first beheld
 This happy light, when answer none returned,
 On a green shady bank, profuse of flowers,
 Pensive I sat me down. There gentle sleep
 First found me, and with soft oppression seized
 My drowsed sense, untroubled, though I thought
 I then was passing to my former state^o
 Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve,
 When suddenly stood at my head a dream,
 Whose inward apparition gently moved
 My fancy to believe I yet had being,
 And lived. One came, methought, of shape divine,
 And said, "Thy mansion wants thee, Adam; rise,
 First Man, of men innumerable ordained
 First father, called by thee, I come thy guide
 To the garden of bliss, thy seat prepared."
 So saying, by the hand he took me, raised,
 And over fields and waters, as in air
 Smooth sliding^o without step, last led me up
 A woody mountain, whose high top was plain,
 A circuit wide,^o enclosed, with goodliest trees^o
 Planted, with walks, and bowers, that what I saw
 Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemed. Each tree
 Loaden with fairest fruit,^o that hung to the eye
 Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
 To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found

274 **enlightened Earth** cf. iii, 731 276 **fair creatures** cf. iv, 790 278 **great Maker**
 cf. v, 184 281 “For in him we live and move” (Acts, xvii, 28) 290 **former state** cf. ii,
 585; iv, 94 302 **Smooth sliding** cf. “Lycidas,” 86 304 **circuit wide** cf. vii, 301; viii,
 100 **goodliest trees** cf. iv, 147 307 **Loaden with fairest fruit** cf. iv, 147

Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
 Had lively shadowed. Here had new begun
 My wandering, had not he who was my guide
 Up hither from among the trees^o appeared,
 Presence Divine. Rejoicing, but with awe,
 In adoration at his feet I fell
 Submiss. He reared me, and, “Whom thou sought’st I am,”
 Said mildly, “Author of all this thou seest
 Above, or round about thee, or beneath.
 This Paradise I give thee: count it thine
 To till and keep, and of the fruit to eat:
 Of every tree that in the garden grows
 Eat freely with glad heart—fear here no dearth;
 But of the tree whose operation brings
 Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set,
 The pledge of thy obedience and thy faith,
 Amid the garden by the Tree of Life,
 Remember what I warn thee: shun to taste,
 And shun the bitter consequence, for know,
 The day thou eat’st thereof, my sole command^o
 Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt die,
 From that day mortal, and this happy state
 Shalt lose, expelled from hence into a world
 Of woe and sorrow.” Sternly he pronounced
 The rigid interdiction, which resounds
 Yet dreadful in mine ear,^o though in my choice
 Not to incur; but soon his clear aspect
 Returned, and gracious purpose^o thus renewed:
 “Not only these fair bounds, but all the Earth
 To thee and to thy race I give; as lords
 Possess it, and all things that therein live,
 Or live in sea or air,^o beast, fish, and fowl.
 In sign whereof, each bird and beast behold
 After their kinds; I bring them to receive
 From thee their names, and pay thee fealty
 With low subjection. Understand the same
 Of fish within their watery residence,
 Not hither summoned, since they cannot change
 Their element to draw the thinner air.”

313 **among the trees** cf. vii, 459 329 **sole command** cf. iii, 94; vii, 47 335 cf. x,
 779-80 337 **purpose** conversation, as at iv, 337 (French *propos*) 341 **in sea or air** cf.
 vii, 629

As thus he spake, each bird and beast behold
 Approaching two and two, these^o cowering low
 With blandishment; each bird stooped on his wing.^o
 I named them as they passed, and understood
 Their nature; with such knowledge God ended
 My sudden apprehension. But in these
 I found not what methought I wanted still,
 And to the Heavenly Vision^o thus presumed:
 “O, by what name—for thou above all these,
 Above mankind, or aught than mankind higher,
 Surpassest far my naming—how may I
 Adore thee, Author of this Universe,

And all this good to Man, for whose well-being
 So amply, and with hands so liberal,
 Thou hast provided all things? But with me
 I see not who partakes. In solitude
 What happiness? who can enjoy alone,
 Or, all enjoying, what contentment find?"

Thus I, presumptuous, and the Vision bright,
 As with a smile more brightened, thus replied:
 "What call'st thus solitude? Is not the earth
 With various living creatures, and the air,
 Replenished, and all these at thy command
 To come and play before thee? Know'st thou not
 Their language and their ways? They also know,
 And reason not contemptibly; with these
 Find pastime, and bear rule; thy realm is large."
 So spake the Universal Lord, and seemed
 So ordering. I, with leave of speech implored,
 And humble deprecation, thus replied:
 "Let not my words offend thee, Heavenly Power;
 My Maker, be propitious while I speak.
 Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
 And these inferior far beneath me set?
 Among unequals what society
 Can sort, what harmony or true delight?
 Which must be mutual, in proportion due

350 **these** the beasts 351 **each bird stooped on his wing** an odd anticipation of the salute (wing-dipping) of planes in formation 356 **the Heavenly Vision** an expression from Acts, xxvi, 19 379 Abraham said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak" (Gen. xviii, 30).

Given and received, but, in disparity,
 The one intense,^o the other still remiss,^o
 Cannot well suit with either, but soon prove
 Tedious alike. Of fellowship I speak
 Such as I seek, fit to participate
 All rational delight, wherein the brute
 Cannot be human consort. They rejoice
 Each with their kind, lion with lioness;
 So fitly them in pairs thou hast combined:
 Much less can bird with beast, or fish with fowl,
 So well converse,^o nor with the ox the ape;
 Worse, then, can man with beast, and least of all."
 "Whereto the Almighty answered, not displeased:
 "A nice^o and subtle happiness, I see,
 Thou to thyself proposest, in the choice
 Of thy associates, Adam, and wilt taste
 No pleasure, though in pleasure,^o solitary.
 What think'st thou, then, of me, and this my state?
 Seem I to thee sufficiently possessed
 Of happiness, or not, who am alone
 From all eternity? for none I know
 Second to me or like, equal much less.^o
 How have I, then, with whom to hold converse,
 Save with the creatures which I made, and those^o
 To me inferior, infinite descents
 Beneath what other creatures are to thee?"

"He ceased, I lowly answered: "To attain
 The height and depth of thy eternal ways
 All human thoughts come short, Supreme of Things;
 Thou in thyself art perfect, and in thee
 Is no deficiency found; not so is Man,

But in degree, the cause of his desire
By conversation with his like to help
Or solace his defects. No need that thou
Should'st propagate, already infinite,
And through all numbers absolute,^o though One;

387 **intense** high-strung **remiss** low, like a beast 396 **converse** have fellowship with
399 **nice** fastidious 402 **though in pleasure** pun on Eden, which in Hebrew means
pleasure; cf. iv, 27-28 407 Horace said this of Jove (*Carm.* I, xii, 18). 409 **those** the
angels 421 **through all numbers absolute** in all respects perfect

But Man by number is to manifest
His single imperfection, and beget
Like of his like, his image multiplied,
In unity^o defective, which requires
Collateral^o love and dearest amity.
Thou, in thy secrecy although alone,
Best with thyself accompanied, seek'st not
Social communication, yet, so pleased,
Canst raise thy creature to what height thou wilt
Of union or communion, deified;
I, by conversing, cannot these erect
From prone, nor in their ways complacency find.”
Thus I emboldened spake, and freedom used
Permissive, and acceptance found, which gained
This answer from the gracious Voice Divine:

“Thus far to try thee, Adam, I was pleased,
And find thee knowing not of beasts alone,
Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself,
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,
My image, not imparted to the brute,
Whose fellowship, therefore, unmeet, for thee,
Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike,
And be so minded still; I, ere thou spak'st,
Knew it not good for Man to be alone,^o
And no such company as then thou saw'st
Intended thee, for trial only brought,
To see how thou couldst judge of fit and meet.
What next I bring shall please thee, be assured,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self,
Thy wish exactly to thy heart's desire.”

‘He ended, or I heard no more; for now
My earthly, by his heavenly overpowered,^o
Which it had long stood under, strained to the height
In that celestial colloquy sublime,
As with an object that excels the sense
Dazzled and spent, sunk down, and sought repair
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, called
By Nature as in aid, and closed mine eyes.

425 **In unity** in the single state 426 **Collateral** with a glance at the etymological
meaning, “side by side” 445 Genesis, ii, 18 453 Daniel, x, 17

Mine eyes he closed, but open left the cell^o
Of fancy, my internal sight; by which,
Abstract^o as in a trance, methought I saw,
Though sleeping where I lay, and saw the Shape
Still glorious before whom awake I stood,
Who, stooping, opened my left side, and took^o
From thence a rib, with cordial^o spirits warm,
And life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,
But suddenly with flesh filled up and healed.

The rib he formed and fashioned with his hands;
 Under his forming hands a creature grew,
 Manlike, but different sex, so lovely fair
 That what seemed fair in all the world seemed now
 Mean, or in her summed up, in her contained,
 And in her looks, which from that time infused
 Sweetness into my heart unfelt before,
 And into all things from her air inspired
 The spirit of love and amorous delight.
 She disappeared, and left me dark; I waked
 To find her, or forever to deplore^o
 Her loss and other pleasures all abjure;
 When out of hope, behold her, not far off,
 Such as I saw her in my dream, adorned
 With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
 To make her amiable. On she came,
 Led by her Heavenly Maker, though unseen,
 And guided by his voice, nor uninformed
 Of nuptial sanctity and marriage rites.
 Grace was in all her steps, Heaven in her eye,
 In every gesture dignity and love.
 I, overjoyed, could not forbear aloud:
 ‘“This turn^o hath made amends; thou hast fulfilled
 Thy words, Creator bounteous and benign,
 Giver of all things fair, but fairest this
 Of all thy gifts, nor enviest.^o I now see

460 Numbers, xxiv, 4 462 **Abstract** withdrawn (for better contemplation) 465—68
 The reader who prefers the unclinical brevity of Genesis, ii, 21 will perhaps be
 reminded of a contemporary production, Rembrandt's "The Anatomy Lesson of Dr.
 Tulp." 466 **cordial** pertaining to the heart (*cor*) 478-79 There are curious
 connections here and in the preceding four lines with the last lines of Milton's
 sonnet "On his Deceased Wife." 491 **This turn** good turn 494 **enviest** grudgest

Bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh, my self
 Before me; Woman is her name, of Man
 Extracted; for this cause he shall forgo
 Father and mother, and to his wife adhere;^o
 And they shall be one flesh, one heart, one soul."
 ‘She heard me thus, and, though divinely brought,
 Yet innocence and virgin modesty,
 Her virtue, and the conscience^o of her worth,
 That would be wooed, and not unsought be won,
 Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retired,
 The more desirable—or, to say all,
 Nature herself, though pure of sinful thought,
 Wrought in her so, that, seeing me, she turned.
 I followed her; she what was honour knew,
 And with obsequious majesty approved
 My pleaded reason. To the nuptial bower
 I led her blushing like the Morn; all Heaven
 And happy constellations on that hour
 Shed their selectest influence; the Earth
 Gave sign of gratulation, and each hill;
 Joyous the birds; fresh gales and gentle airs
 Whispered it to the woods, and from their wings
 Flung rose, flung odours from the spicy shrub,
 Disporting, till the amorous bird of night^o
 Sung spousal, and bid haste the Evening-star
 On his hill-top to light the bridal lamp.
 ‘Thus I have told thee all my state, and brought
 My story to the sum of earthly bliss

Which I enjoy, and must confess to find
 In all things else delight indeed, but such
 As, used or not, works in the mind no change,
 Nor vehement desire—these delicacies
 I mean of taste, sight, smell, herbs, fruits, and flowers,
 Walks, and the melody of birds; but here,
 Far otherwise, transported I behold,
 Transported touch; here passion first I felt,
 Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
 Superior and unmoved, here only weak

498 to his wife adhere *adhaerebit uxori suae*, read the Vulgate and Junius versions
 (Gen. ii, 24). 502 **conscience** consciousness 518 **the amorous bird of night** cf. v, 40

Against the charm of beauty's powerful glance.^o
 Or Nature failed in me, and left some part
 Not proof enough such object to sustain,
 Or, from my side subducting, took perhaps
 More than enough—at least on her bestowed
 Too much of ornament, in outward show
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.^o
 For well I understand in the prime end
 Of Nature her the inferior, in the mind
 And inward faculties, which most excel;
 In outward also her resembling less
 His image who made both, and less expressing
 The character of that dominion given
 O'er other creatures. Yet when I approach
 Her loveliness, so absolute^o she seems
 And in herself complete, so well to know
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best.
 All higher knowledge in her presence falls
 Degraded; Wisdom in discourse with her
 Loses, discountenanced, and like Folly shows;
 Authority and Reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made
 Occasionally; and, to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind and nobleness their seat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard angelic placed.'

To whom the Angel, with contracted brow:
 'Accuse not Nature, she hath done her part;
 Do thou but thine, and be not diffident
 Of Wisdom; she deserts thee not if thou
 Dismiss not her, when most thou need'st her nigh,
 By attributing overmuch to things
 Less excellent, as thou thyself perceiv'st.
 For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so?
 An outside; fair, no doubt, and worthy well
 Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love—
 Not thy subjection, weigh with her thyself,
 Then value: oft-times nothing profits more
 Than self-esteem, grounded on just and right

532-33 cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 1003—07 538-39 *Samson Agonistes*, 1025-26 547
absolute perfect, as at 421

Well managed. Of that skill, the more thou know'st,
 The more she will acknowledge thee her head,
 And to realities yield all her shows,
 Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
 So awful, that with honour thou may'st love
 Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.

But, if the sense of touch, whereby mankind
 Is propagated, seem such dear delight
 Beyond all other, think the same vouchsafed
 To cattle and each beast; which would not be
 To them made common and divulged if aught
 Therein enjoyed were worthy to subdue
 The soul of Man or passion in him move.
 What higher in her society thou find'st
 Attractive, human, rational, love still:
 In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
 Wherein true love consists not. Love refines
 The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
 In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale^o
 By which to heavenly love thou may'st ascend,
 Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause
 Among the beasts no mate for thee was found.'

To whom thus, half abashed, Adam replied:
 'Neither her outside formed so fair, nor aught
 In procreation, common to all kinds
 (Though higher of the genial^o bed by far,
 And with mysterious reverence, I deem),
 So much delights me as those graceful acts,^o
 Those thousand decencies,^o that daily flow
 From all her words and actions, mixed with love
 And sweet compliance, which declare unfeigned
 Union of mind, or in us both one soul—
 Harmony to behold in wedded pair
 More grateful than harmonious sound to the ear.
 Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose
 What inward thence I feel, not therefore foiled,
 Who meet with various objects, from the sense
 Variously representing; yet, still free,

591 **scale** ladder 598 **genial** nuptial 600 **graceful acts** also attributed to Belial, ii,
 109 601 **decencies** graces, winsome traits

Approve the best, and follow what I approve.^o
 To love thou blam'st me not, for Love, thou say'st,
 Leads up to Heaven, is both the way and guide;
 Bear with me, then, if lawful what I ask.
 Love not the Heavenly Spirits,^o and how their love
 Express they, by looks only, or do they mix
 Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?'

To whom the Angel, with a smile that glowed
 Celestial rosy-red, Love's proper hue,
 Answered: 'Let it suffice thee that thou know'st
 Us happy, and without Love no happiness.
 Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
 (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
 In eminence, and obstacle find none
 Of membrane, joint, or limb, exclusive bars;
 Easier than air with air, if Spirits embrace,
 Total they mix, union of pure with pure
 Desiring, nor restrained conveyance need
 As flesh to mix with flesh, or soul with soul.
 But I can now no more: the parting Sun
 Beyond the Earth's green cape and verdant isles^o
 Hesperian sets, my signal to depart.
 Be strong, live happy, and love! but first of all
 Him whom to love is to obey,^o and keep
 His great command; take heed lest passion sway
 Thy judgement to do aught which else free-will
 Would not admit; thine and of all thy sons

The weal or woe in thee is placed; beware!
I in thy persevering shall rejoice,
And all the Blest. Stand fast; to stand or fall
Free in thine own arbitrament it lies.
Perfect within, no outward aid require;
And all temptation to transgress repel.'

So saying, he arose, whom Adam thus
Followed with benediction: 'Since to part,

608—11 Adam gives reassurances that he is still making reasonable choices. 615
Heavenly Spirits cf. iv, 361; vi, 788; also ii, 824—25 631 **green cape and verdant
isles** evidently a reference to Cape Verde and the Cape Verde Islands on the west
(which is what *Hesperean* [632] means) coast of Africa. 634 "For this is the love of
God, that we keep his commandments" (1 John, v, 3).

Go, Heavenly Guest, ° Ethereal Messenger,
Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore.
Gentle to me and affable hath been
Thy condescension, and shall be honoured ° ever
With grateful memory. Thou to Mankind
Be good ° and friendly still, and oft return.'

So parted they, the Angel up to Heaven
From the thick shade, and Adam to his bower.

646 **Heavenly Guest** cf. vii, 69 649 **be honoured** elide 651 **good** in the social sense,
gracious

BOOK IX

THE ARGUMENT

Satan having compassed the Earth, with meditated guile returns as a mist by night into Paradise; enters into the Serpent sleeping. Adam and Eve in the morning go forth to their labours, which Eve proposes to divide in several places, each labouring apart; Adam consents not, alleging the danger lest that enemy of whom they were forewarned should attempt her found alone. Eve, loth to be thought not circumspect or firm enough, urges her going apart, the rather desirous to make trial of her strength; Adam at last yields. The Serpent finds her alone: his subtle approach, first gazing, then speaking, with much flattery extolling Eve above all other creatures. Eve, wondering to hear the Serpent speak, asks how he attained to human speech and such understanding not till now; the Serpent answers that by tasting of a certain tree in the garden he attained both to speech and reason, till then void of both. Eve requires him to bring her to that tree, and finds it to be the Tree of Knowledge forbidden; the Serpent, now grown bolder, with many wiles and arguments induces her at length to eat. She, pleased with the taste, deliberates a while whether to impart thereof to Adam or not; at last brings him of the fruit; relates what persuaded her to eat thereof Adam, at first amazed, but perceiving her lost, resolves, through vehemence of love, to perish with her, and, extenuating the trespass, eats also of the fruit. The effects thereof in them both; they seek to cover their nakedness; then fall to variance and accusation of one another.

No more of talk where God or Angel Guest^o
With Man, as with his friend, familiar used
To sit indulgent, and with him partake

1 **Anget Guest** cf. v, 328

Rural repast, permitting him the while
Venial discourse unblamed. I now must change
Those notes to tragic, foul distrust, and breach
Disloyal on the part of man, revolt
And disobedience; on the part of Heaven,
Now alienated, distance and distaste,
Anger and just rebuke, and judgement given,
That brought into this World a world of woe,^o
Sin and her shadow Death, and Misery,
Death's harbinger. Sad task,^o yet argument^o
Not less but more heroic than the wrath
Of stern Achilles on his foe^o pursued
Thrice fugitive about Troy wall; or rage
Of Turnus for Lavinia disespoused;^o
Or Neptune's ire, or Juno's, that so long
Perplexed the Greek^o and Cytherea's son:^o
If answerable style I can obtain
Of my celestial patroness, who deigns
Her nightly visitation unimplored,
And dictates to me slumbering, or inspires
Easy my unpremeditated verse;
Since first this subject for heroic song
Pleased me, long choosing and beginning late;
Not sedulous by nature to indite
Wars, hitherto the only argument
Heroic deemed, chief mastery to dissect
With long and tedious havoc fabled knights
In battles feigned (the better fortitude
Of patience^o and heroic martyrdom
Unsung), or to describe races and games,
Or tilting furniture, emblazoned shields,
Impresses^o quaint, caparisons^o and steeds,

11 a **world of woe** cf. viii, 332-33 13 **Sad task** cf. v, 564 **argument** subject 15 **his foe** Hector in the *Iliad* 17 **Lavinia disespoused** As related in the latter part of the *Aeneid*, the daughter of Latinus king of Latium had been betrothed to Turnus but married Aeneas. 19 **the Greek** Ulysses **Cytherea's son** Cytherea is Venus, mother of Aeneas. 31-32 **the better fortitude/ Of patience** This also sounds personal. 35 **Impresses** emblems on knights' shields (Italian *imprese*— something stamped on) **caparisons** ornamental coverings for horses

Bases° and tinsel trappings, gorgeous knights
 At joust and tournament, then marshalled feast
 Served up in hall with sewers and seneschals°—
 The skill of artifice or office mean,
 Not that which justly gives heroic name
 To person or to poem. Me, of these
 Nor skilled nor studious, higher argument
 Remains, sufficient of itself to raise
 That name, unless an age too late,° or cold
 Climate,° or years, damp my intended wing
 Depressed; and much they may if all be mine,
 Not hers who brings it nightly to my ear.
 The sun was sunk, and after him the star
 Of Hesperus, whose office is to bring
 Twilight upon the Earth, short arbiter
 'Twixt day and night, and now from end to end
 Night's hemisphere had veiled the horizon round,
 When Satan, who late fled before the threats
 Of Gabriel out of Eden, now improved
 In meditated fraud and malice, bent
 On Man's destruction, maugre° what might hap
 Of heavier on himself, fearless returned.
 By night he fled, and at midnight returned
 From compassing the Earth; cautious of day,°
 Since Uriel, Regent of the Sun, descried
 His entrance and forewarned the Cherubim
 That kept their watch. Thence full of anguish driven,

36 **Bases** housings for horses. Or possibly the reference is to a kilt which hung from the waists of knights on horseback to about their knees. The word is also used of the lower part of a shield. 38 **sewers and seneschals** waiters and house stewards 44 **an age too late** for epic poetry 44-45 **cold/ Climate** a subject Milton kept returning to, as when, on the last page of his *History of Britain*, he wrote, "the sun, which we want, ripens wits as well as fruits." The last sentence of the first paragraph of *Areopagitica* begins: "But if from the industry of a life wholly dedicated to studious labors, and those natural endowments haply not the worst for two and fifty degrees of northern latitude . . ." 56 **maugre** in spite of, as at iii, 255 58—59 "And the Lord said unto Satan, Whence comest thou? Then Satan answered the Lord, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it" (Job, i, 7).

The space of seven continued nights he rode
 With darkness, thrice the equinoctial line
 He circled, four times crossed the car of Night
 From pole to pole,° traversing each colure,°
 On the eighth returned, and on the coast averse
 From entrance or cherubic watch by stealth
 Found unsuspected way. There was a place
 (Now not, though Sin, not Time, first wrought
 the change)
 Where Tigris, at the foot of Paradise,
 Into a gulf shot under ground, till part
 Rose up a fountain by the Tree of Life;
 In with the river sunk, and with it rose
 Satan, involved in rising mist; then sought
 Where to lie hid. Sea he had searched and land

From Eden over Pontus, and the Pool
 Maeotis,^o up beyond the river Ob;^o
 Downward as far antarctic; and, in length,
 West from Orontes^o to the ocean barred
 At Darien,^o thence to the land where flows
 Ganges and Indus. Thus the orb he roamed
 With narrow search, and with inspection deep
 Considered every creature, which of all
 Most opportune might serve his wiles, and found
 The Serpent subtlest beast of all the field.^o
 Him, after long debate,^o irresolute
 Of thoughts revolved, his final sentence chose
 Fit vessel, fittest imp of fraud, in whom

66 **From pole to pole** cf. iii, 560 **colure** defined by the *Oxford English Dictionary* as “each of two great circles which intersect each other at right angles at the poles, and divide the equinoctial and the ecliptic into four equal parts. One passes through the equinoctial, the other the solstitial, points of the ecliptic.” 77-78 **Pontus, and the Pool/ Maeotis** the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov 78 **Ob** in Siberia 80 **Orontes** the river in Syria 81 **Darien** the Isthmus of Panama, which “barred” the way from the Atlantic to the Pacific 86 Compare the almost punning return at 560, and the previous use of the line at vii, 495. Without reference to the serpent, “beast of the field” begins one line in the seventh book (522) and ends another in the tenth (176). 87 **long debate** cf. ii, 390

To enter, and his dark suggestions^o hide
 From sharpest sight; for in the wily snake,
 Whatever sleights, none would suspicious mark,
 As from his wit and native subtlety
 Proceeding, which, in other beasts observed,
 Doubt might beget of diabolic power
 Active within beyond the sense of brute.
 Thus he resolved, but first from inward grief
 His bursting passion into plaints thus poured:^o
 ‘O Earth, how like to Heaven, if not preferred^o
 More justly, seat worthier of gods, as built
 With second thoughts, reforming what was old!
 For what God, after better, worse would build?
 Terrestrial Heaven, danced round by other Heavens,
 That shine, yet bear their bright officious^o lamps,
 Light above light, for thee alone, as seems,
 In thee concentrating all their precious beams
 Of sacred influence:^o As God in Heaven
 Is centre, yet extends to all, so thou
 Centring receiv’st from all those orbs; in thee,
 Not in themselves, all their known virtue appears,^o
 Productive in herb, plant, and nobler birth
 Of creatures animate with gradual life
 Of growth, sense, reason, all summed up in Man.
 With what delight could I have walked thee round,
 If I could joy in aught—sweet interchange
 Of hill and valley,^o rivers, woods, and plains,^o
 Now land, now sea, and shores with forest crowned,
 Rocks, dens, and caves;^o but I in none of these
 Find place or refuge, and the more I see
 Pleasures about me, so much more I feel
 Torment within me, as from the hateful siege
 Of contraries; all good to me becomes
 Bane,^o and in Heaven much worse would be my state.
 But neither here seek I, no, nor in Heaven,
 To dwell, unless by mastering Heaven’s Supreme,

90 **suggestions** temptations 98 Note the passionate alliteration. 99 cf. vii, 328-29
 104 **officious** as at viii, 99 107 **sacred influence** cf. ii, 1034 110 **virtue appears**
 elide, for scansion 116 **hill and valley** cf. ii, 495; vi, 784 **rivers, woods, and plains**
 cf. viii, 275 118 **Rocks, dens, and caves** cf. ii. 621 122-23 cf. iv, 109

Nor hope to be myself less miserable
 By what I seek, but others to make such
 As I, though thereby worse to me redound.
 For only in destroying I find ease-
 To my relentless thoughts; and him destroyed,
 Or won to what may work his utter loss,^o
 For whom all this was made, all this will soon
 Follow, as to him linked in weal or woe^o—
 In woe then, that destruction wide may range:
 To me shall be the glory sole among
 The Infernal Powers, in one day to have marred
 What he, Almighty styled, six nights and days
 Continued making, and who knows how long
 Before had been contriving? though perhaps
 Not longer than since I in one night freed
 From servitude inglorious well-nigh half
 The angelic name, and thinner left the throng
 Of his adorers. He, to be avenged,
 And to repair his numbers thus impaired—
 Whether such virtue, spent of old, now failed
 More Angels to create (if they at least
 Are his created), or to spite us more—
 Determined to advance into our room
 A creature formed of earth, and him endow,
 Exalted from so base original,^o
 With heavenly spoils, our spoils. What he decreed
 He effected; Man he made, and for him built
 Magnificent this World, and Earth his seat,
 Him lord pronounced, and, O indignity!
 Subjected to his service Angel-wings
 And flaming ministers,^o to watch and tend
 Their earthy^o charge. Of these the vigilance
 I dread, and to elude, thus wrapped in mist
 Of midnight vapour, glide obscure, and pry
 In every bush and brake, where hap may find
 The Serpent sleeping, in whose mazy folds
 To hide me, and the dark intent I bring.
 O foul descent! that I, who erst contended

131 **utter loss** cf. ii, 440; iii, 308 133 **weal or woe** cf. viii, 638 150 **original** origin
 156 **flaming ministers** “who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming
 fire” (Ps. civ, 4). 157 **earthy** There is no textual authority for earthly.

With Gods to sit the highest, am now constrained
 Into a beast, and, mixed with bestial slime,
 This essence to incarnate and imbrute,
 That to the height of deity aspired;
 But what will not ambition and revenge
 Descend to? who aspires must down as low
 As high he soared, obnoxious,^o first or last,
 To basest things. Revenge, at first though sweet,
 Bitter ere long back on itself recoils;^o
 Let it; I reck not, so it light well aimed,
 Since higher I fall short, on him who next
 Provokes my envy, this new favourite
 Of Heaven, this man of clay, son of despite,
 Whom, us the more to spite, his Maker raised
 From dust: spite then with spite is best repaid.^o

So saying, through each thicket, dank or dry,
 Like a black mist low-creeping, he held on
 His midnight search, where soonest he might find
 The Serpent.° Him fast sleeping soon he found,
 In labyrinth of many a round self-rolled,
 His head the midst, well stored with subtle wiles;
 Not yet in horrid shade or dismal den,
 Nor° nocent yet, but on the grassy herb,
 Fearless, unfeared, he slept. In at his mouth
 The Devil entered, and his brutal sense,
 In heart or head, possessing soon inspired
 With act intelligential, but his sleep
 Disturbed not, waiting close° the approach of morn.
 Now, whenas sacred light began to dawn
 In Eden on the humid flowers, that breathed
 Their morning incense, when all things that breathe
 From the Earth's great altar send up silent praise
 To the Creator, and his nostrils fill
 With grateful smell,° forth came the human pair
 And joined their vocal worship to the choir
 Of creatures wanting voice; that done, partake

170 **obnoxious** exposed (to) 172 **back on itself recoils** cf. ii, 759; vi, 194 178 So
 Prometheus says, "I but answered insult with insult" (Aeschylus, *Prometheus*
Bound, 970). 181-82 **might find/ The Serpent** cf. 160—61 186 **Nor Not**, 1667 191
close hidden 196—97 "And the Lord smelled a sweet savour" (Gen. viii, 21). 197
grateful smell cf. iv, 165

The season, prime for sweetest scents and airs,
 Then cōmmune how that day they best may ply
 Their growing work—for much their work outgrew
 The hands' dispatch of two gardening so wide.
 And Eve first to her husband thus began:

'Adam, well may we labour still to dress
 This garden, still to tend plant, herb, and flower,
 Our pleasant task enjoined; but, till more hands
 Aid us, the work under our labour grows
 Luxurious by restraint; what we by day
 Lop overgrown, or prune, or prop, or bind,
 One night or two with wanton growth° derides,
 Tending to wild. Thou, therefore, now advise,
 Or hear° what to my mind first thoughts present:
 Let us divide our labours—thou where choice
 Leads thee, or where most needs, whether to wind
 The woodbine round this arbour, or direct
 The clasping ivy where to climb, while I
 In yonder spring° of roses intermixed
 With myrtle find what to redress till noon.
 For, while so near each other thus all day
 Our task we choose, what wonder if so near
 Looks intervene and smiles, or object new
 Casual discourse draw on, which intermits
 Our day's work, brought to little, though begun
 Early, and the hour of supper comes unearned.'

To whom mild answer Adam thus returned:
 'Sole Eve, associate sole, to me beyond
 Compare° above all living creatures° dear,
 Well hast thou motioned, well thy thoughts employed
 How we might best fulfil the work which here
 God hath assigned us, nor of me shalt pass
 Unpraised; for nothing lovelier can be found
 In woman than to study household good,
 And good works in her husband to promote.

Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed
Labour as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,

211 **wanton growth** cf. iv, 629 213 **hear** *bear*, 1674 218 **spring** thicket of young
shrubs 227—28 **beyond/ Compare** cf. i, 587—88; iii, 138 228 **living creatures** cf.
iv, 287; vii, 413, 455; viii, 370

Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles; for smiles from reason flow,
To brute denied, and are of love the food—
Love, not the lowest end of human life.
For not to irksome toil but to delight
He made us, and delight to reason joined.
These paths and bowers doubt not but our joint hands
Will keep from wilderness with ease, as wide
As we need walk, till younger hands ere long^o
Assist us. But, if much converse perhaps
Thee satiate, to short absence I could yield,
For solitude sometimes is best society,^o
And short retirement urges sweet return.
But other doubt possesses me, lest harm
Befall thee, severed from me, for thou know'st
What hath been warned us—what malicious foe,
Envying our happiness, and of his own
Despairing, seeks to work us woe and shame
By sly assault, and somewhere nigh at hand
Watches, no doubt, with greedy hope to find
His wish and best advantage, us asunder,
Hopeless to circumvent us joined, where each
To other speedy aid might lend at need;
Whether his first design be to withdraw
Our fealty from God, or to disturb
Conjugal love, than which perhaps no bliss
Enjoyed by us excites his envy more;
Or this, or worse, leave not the faithful side
That gave thee being, still shades thee and protects.
The wife, where danger or dishonour lurks,
Safest and seemliest by her husband stays,
Who guards her, or with her the worst endures.'

To whom the virgin majesty of Eve,
As one who loves and some unkindness meets,
With sweet austere composure thus replied:
'Offspring of Heaven^o and Earth, and all Earth's lord,
That such an enemy we have, who seeks
Our ruin, both by thee informed I learn,

246 **ere long** cf. 172 249 a Ciceronian sentiment 273 **Offspring of Heaven**
Compare other applications of this phrase, ii, 310; iii, 1.

And from the parting Angel overheard,
As in a shady nook I stood behind,
Just then returned at shut of evening flowers.
But that thou shouldst my firmness therefore doubt
To God or thee, because we have a foe
May tempt it, I expected not to hear.
His violence thou fear'st not, being such
As we, not capable of death or pain,
Can either not receive, or can repel.
His fraud is, then, thy fear; which plain infers
Thy equal fear that my firm faith^o and love
Can by his fraud be shaken or seduced—
Thoughts, which how found they harbour in thy breast,
Adam, misthought of her to thee so dear?'

To whom, with healing words,^o Adam replied:
 'Daughter of God and Man, immortal Eve;^o
 For such thou art, from sin and blame entire,^o
 Not diffident of thee do I dissuade
 Thy absence from my sight, but to avoid
 The attempt itself, intended by our foe.
 For he who tempts, though in vain, at least asperses
 The tempted with dishonour foul, supposed
 Not incorruptible of faith, not proof
 Against temptation. Thou thyself with scorn
 And anger wouldst resent the offered wrong,
 Though ineffectual found; misdeem not, then,
 If such affront I labour to avert
 From thee alone, which on us both at once
 The enemy, though bold, will hardly dare;
 Or, daring, first on me the assault shall light.
 Nor thou his malice and false guile contemn;
 Subtle he needs must be who could seduce
 Angels, nor think superfluous others' aid.
 I from the influence of thy looks receive
 Access in every virtue—in thy sight
 More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
 Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
 Shame to be overcome or overreached,

286 **firm faith** cf. a Satanic phrase, ii, 36 290 **healing words** cf. *Samson Agonistes*,
 605 291 Identical, except for one word, with iv, 660. 292 **entire** untouched, whole
 (integer)

Would utmost vigour raise, and raised unite.
 Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel
 When I am present, and thy trial choose
 With me, best witness of thy virtue tried?'
 So spake domestic Adam in his care
 And matrimonial love; but Eve, who thought
 Less attributed to her faith sincere,
 Thus her reply with accent sweet renewed:
 'If this be our condition, thus to dwell
 In narrow circuit straitened by a foe,
 Subtle or violent, we not endued
 Single with like defence wherever met,
 How are we happy, still in fear of harm?
 But harm precedes not sin; only our foe
 Tempting affronts us with his foul esteem
 Of our integrity; his foul esteem
 Sticks no dishonour on our front,^o but turns
 Foul on himself—then wherefore shunned or feared
 By us, who rather double honour gain
 From his surmise proved false, find peace within,
 Favour from Heaven, our witness, from the event?
 And what is faith, love, virtue, unassayed
 Alone, without exterior help sustained?^o
 Let us not then suspect our happy state
 Left so imperfect by the Maker wise
 As not secure to single or combined.
 Frail is our happiness if this be so,
 And Eden were no Eden, thus exposed.'
 To whom thus Adam fervently replied:^o
 'O Woman, best are all things as the will
 Of God ordained them; his creating hand
 Nothing imperfect or deficient left
 Of all that he created, much less Man,
 Or aught that might his happy state^o secure,

Secure from outward force. Within himself

330 **front** brow, a pun with *affronts* (328) 335-36 Compare the famous sentence in *Areopagitica* that begins, "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary. . . ." 342 One of the many formula lines of speaking, here comparable to iv, 440. 347 **happy state** the last of many uses of this phrase, i, 29, 141; iv, 519; v, 234, 504, 536, 830; viii, 331; ix, 337

The danger lies, yet lies within his power;
Against his will he can receive no harm.
But God left free the Will; for what obeys
Reason is free, and Reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect,^o
Lest, by some fair appearing good surprised,
She dictate false, and misinform the Will
To do what God expressly hath forbid.
Not then mistrust, but tender love, enjoins
That I should mind thee oft; and mind^o thou me.
Firm we subsist, yet possible to swerve,
Since Reason not impossibly may meet
Some specious object by the foe suborned,
And fall into deception unaware,
Not keeping strictest watch,^o as she was warned.
Seek not temptation, then, which to avoid
Were better, and most likely if from me
Thou sever not; trial will come unsought.
Wouldst thou approve thy constancy, approve
First thy obedience; the other who can know,
Not seeing thee attempted, who attest?
But if thou think trial unsought may find
Us both securer than thus warned thou seem'st,
Go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more.
Go in thy native innocence; rely
On what thou hast of virtue; summon all;
For God towards thee hath done his part: do thine.'^o
So spake the Patriarch of Mankind, but Eve
Persisted; yet submit, though last,^o replied:
'With thy permission, then, and thus forewarned,
Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
Touched only, that our trial, when least sought,
May find us both perhaps far less prepared,
The willinger I go, nor much expect
A foe so proud will first the weaker seek;^o
So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.'
Thus saying, from her husband's hand her hand

353 **still erect** always on guard 358 **mind** remind 363 **strictest watch** cf. iv, 783 375
Adam passes on Raphael's admonition, viii, 561—62. 377 **though last** i.e.,
determined to get in the last word 383 The most foolish thought of all: cf. 421-24,
480—90

Soft^o she withdrew, and, like a wood-nymph light,
Oread or Dryad,^o or of Delia's^o train,
Betook her to the groves, but Delia's self
In gait surpassed and goddesslike deport,
Though not as she with bow and quiver armed,^o
But with such gardening tools as Art, yet rude,
Guiltless of fire, had formed, or Angels brought.
To Pales,^o or Pomona,^o thus adorned,
Likest^o she seemed, Pomona when she fled
Vertumnus,^o or to Ceres in her prime,
Yet virgin of Proserpina from Jove.^o
Her long with ardent look his eye pursued^o

Delighted, but desiring more her stay.
 Oft he to her his charge of quick return
 Repeated; she to him as oft engaged
 To be returned by noon amid the bower,
 And all things in best order to invite
 Noontide repast, or afternoon's repose.
 O much deceived, much failing, hapless Eve,
 Of thy presumed return! event perverse!
 Thou never from that hour in Paradise
 Found'st either sweet repast^o or sound repose;
 Such ambush, hid among sweet flowers and shades,
 Waited, with hellish rancour imminent,
 To intercept thy way, or send thee back
 Despoiled of innocence, of faith, of bliss.
 For now, and since first break of dawn, the Fiend,
 Mere serpent^o in appearance, forth was come,

386 **Soft** It is profitably ambiguous whether this is an adjective or an adverb; cf. v, 17. 387 **Oread or Dryad** mountain or wood nymph **Delia** Diana 389-90
 "Sometimes Diana he her takes to be,/ But misseth bow, and shafts, and buskins to her knee" *Faerie Queene*, I, vi, 16. 393 **Pales** Roman protectress of flocks and herds **Pomona** as at v. 378; appropriately assigned a pruning hook by Ovid (cf. 391) 394 **Likest Likeliest**, 1674 395 **Vertumnus** the god of vegetative change (verto) 395-96 cf. iv, 268 ff. 397 cf. iv, 125, 572 407 **sweet repast** cf. v, 630; viii, 214 413 **Mere serpent** all serpent, in contrast to Rabbinical glosses and some previous literature (such as Andreini's play *L'Adamo*, 1613) and old illustrations (e.g., Raphael's "Adam and Eve," 1510) that assigned a human countenance to the tempting serpent

And on his quest where likeliest he might find
 The only two of mankind, but in them
 The whole included race, his purposed prey.
 In bower and field he sought, where any tuft
 Of grove or garden-plot more pleasant lay,
 Their tendance or plantation for delight;
 By fountain or by shady rivulet
 He sought them both, but wished his hap might find
 Eve separate; he wished, but not with hope
 Of what so seldom chanced, when to his wish,
 Beyond his hope, Eve separate he spies,^o
 Veiled in a cloud of fragrance, where she stood,
 Half-spied, so thick the roses bushing round
 About her glowed, oft stooping to support
 Each flower of slender stalk, whose head, though gay
 Carnation, purple, azure, or specked with gold,
 Hung drooping unsustained. Then she upstays
 Gently with myrtle band, mindless the while
 Herself, though fairest unsupported flower,^o
 From her best prop so far, and storm so nigh.
 Nearer he drew, and many a walk traversed
 Of stateliest covert, cedar, pine, or palm;
 Then voluble^o and bold, now hid, now seen
 Among thick-woven arborets and flowers
 Imbordered on each bank, the hand^o of Eve—
 Spot more delicious than those gardens feigned
 Or of revived Adonis,^o or renowned
 Alcinous,^o host of old Laertes' son,
 Or that, not mystic,^o where the sapient king
 Held dalliance with his fair Egyptian spouse.^o
 Much he the place admired, the person more.
 As one who long in populous city pent,
 Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air,

424 cf. 422 432 cf. iv, 270 436 **voluble** rolling 438 **hand** handiwork 440 **revived** **Adonis** after being slain by the boar, cf. i, 46 ff. 441 **Alcinous** see v, 341; whose gardens were likewise paired by Pliny with the gardens of Adonis, *Natural History*, XIX, iv, 19 442 **not mystic** It is disputed whether this means (a) not mythical (unlike the garden of Adonis) or (b) not symbolic or allegorical, contrary to common Biblical interpretation. 442—43 a reference to the marriage of Solomon with “Pharaoh’s daughter” (1 Kings, iii, 1)

Forth issuing on a summer’s morn to breathe
 Among the pleasant villages and farms
 Adjoined, from each thing met conceives delight,
 The smell of grain, or tedded grass, or kine,
 Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound;
 If chance with nymphlike step fair virgin pass,
 What pleasing seemed, for her^o now pleases more,^o
 She most, and in her looks sums all delight:
 Such pleasure took the Serpent to behold
 This flowery plat,^o the sweet recess of Eve
 Thus early, thus alone; her heavenly form
 Angelic, but more soft and feminine,
 Her graceful innocence, her every air
 Of gesture or least action, overawed
 His malice, and with rapine sweet bereaved
 His fierceness of the fierce intent it brought.
 That space the Evil One abstracted stood
 From his own evil, and for the time remained
 Stupidly good, of enmity disarmed,
 Of guile, of hate, of envy, of revenge.
 But the hot hell that always in him burns,
 Though in mid Heaven, soon ended his delight,
 And tortures him now more the more he sees
 Of pleasure not for him ordained: then soon
 Fierce hate he recollects, and all his thoughts
 Of mischief, gratulating, thus excites:
 ‘Thoughts, whither have ye led me? with what sweet
 Compulsion thus transported to forget
 What hither brought us? hate, not love, nor hope
 Of Paradise for Hell, hope here to taste
 Of pleasure, but all pleasure to destroy,
 Save what is in destroying; other joy
 To me is lost. Then let me not let pass
 Occasion which now smiles: behold alone
 The Woman, opportune to all attempts;
 Her husband, for I view far round, not nigh,
 Whose higher intellectual more I shun,
 And strength, of courage haughty, and of limb

452-53 “And all, though pleasant, yet she made much more.” *Faerie Queene*, II, vi,
 24, 5 453 **for her** on her account 456 **plat** plot

Heroic built, though of terrestrial mould;
 Foe not formidable, exempt from wound,
 I not; so much hath Hell debased and pain
 Enfeebled me to what I was in Heaven.
 She fair, divinely fair, fit love for gods,
 Not terrible, though terror be in love,
 And beauty, not approached by stronger hate,
 Hate stronger under show of love well feigned,
 The way which to her ruin now I tend.’^o

So spake the Enemy of Mankind, enclosed
 In serpent, inmate bad, and toward Eve
 Addressed his way; not with indented wave,
 Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,

Circular base of rising folds, that towered
 Fold above fold, a surging maze; his head
 Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes;
 With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
 Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
 Floated redundant. Pleasing was his shape
 And lovely; never since of serpent kind
 Lovelier—not those that in Illyria changed^o
 Hermione and Cadmus, or the god
 In Epidaurus;^o nor to which transformed
 Ammonian Jove,^o or Capitoline,^o was seen,
 He with Olympias, this with her who bore
 Scipio,^o the height of Rome. With tract oblique
 At first, as one who sought access but feared
 To interrupt, sidelong he works his way.
 As when a ship, by skilful steersman wrought
 Nigh river's mouth or foreland, where the wind

493 This sounds like the end of a stage speech. 505 ff. After founding Thebes, *Cadmus* retired to *Illyria*, north of the Adriatic, where he prayed that he might be transformed to a serpent, and the prayer was granted for both him and his wife *Hermione* (or *Harmonia*). 506-07 **the god/ In Epidaurus** In Argolis, the Peloponnesus, the deity of healing, Aesculapius, was supposed to put in an oracular appearance as a serpent. 508 **Ammonian Jove** changed to a serpent to woo *Olympias*, the mother of Alexander the Great **Capitoline** Jove as presider over the Roman Capitol 510 **Scipio** Africanus (the Elder) (237-183 B.C.), Rome's greatest general up to the time of Julius Caesar

Veers oft, as oft so steers and shifts her sail,
 So varied he, and of his tortuous train
 Curled many a wanton wreath in sight of Eve
 To lure her eye; she, busied, heard the sound
 Of rustling leaves but minded not, as used
 To such disport before her through the field
 From every beast, more duteous at her call
 Than at Circean^o call the herd disguised.
 He, bolder now, uncalled before her stood,
 But as in gaze admiring. Oft he bowed
 His turret^o crest and sleek enamelled^o neck,
 Fawning, and licked the ground whereon she trod.
 His gentle dumb expression turned at length
 The eye of Eve to mark his play; he, glad
 Of her attention gained, with serpent-tongue
 Organic, or impulse of vocal air,
 His fraudulent temptation thus began:
 'Wonder not, sovran mistress, if perhaps
 Thou canst who art sole wonder, much less arm
 Thy looks, the heaven of mildness, with disdain,
 Displeased that I approach thee thus, and gaze
 Insatiate, I thus single, nor have feared
 Thy awful brow, more awful thus retired.
 Fairest resemblance of thy Maker fair,
 Thee all things living gaze on, all things thine
 By gift, and thy celestial beauty adore,
 With ravishment beheld, there best beheld
 Where universally admired. But here,
 In this enclosure wild, these beasts among,
 Beholders rude, and shallow to discern
 Half what in thee is fair, one man except,
 Who sees thee? (and what is one?) who shouldst be seen
 A Goddess among Gods, adored and served
 By Angels numberless, thy daily train?'

So glozed° the Tempter, and his proem° tuned.
Into the heart of Eve his words made way,
Though at the voice much marvelling; at length,

522 In the *Odyssey* the enchantress Circe changed some of Ulysses' men into swine
—a myth that became the basis of “Comus.” 525 **turret** towering **enamelled**
variegated 549 **glozed** flattered **proem** preliminary speech

Not unamazed, she thus in answer spake:
‘What may this mean? Language of Man pronounced
By tongue of brute, and human sense expressed?
The first at least of these I thought denied
To beasts, whom God on their creation-day
Created mute to all articulate sound;
The latter I demur,° for in their looks
Much reason, and in their actions, oft appears.
Thee, Serpent, subtlest beast of all the field°
I knew, but not with human voice endued;
Redouble, then, this miracle, and say,
How cam'st thou speakable of mute, and how
To me so friendly grown above the rest
Of brutal kind that daily are in sight:
Say, for such wonder claims attention due.’

To whom the guileful Tempter thus replied:
‘Empress of this fair World, resplendent Eve,
Easy to me it is to tell thee all
What thou command'st, and right thou shouldst be
obeyed.

I was at first as other beasts that graze
The trodden herb, of abject thoughts and low,
As was my food, nor aught but food discerned
Or sex, and apprehended nothing high,
Till on a day, roving the field, I chanced
A goodly tree far distant° to behold,
Loaden with fruit° of fairest colours mixed,
Ruddy and gold; I nearer drew to gaze,
When from the boughs a savoury odour blown,
Grateful to appetite, more pleased my sense
Than smell of sweetest fennel,° or the teats
Of ewe or goat dropping with milk at even,
Unsucked of lamb or kid, that tend their play.
To satisfy the sharp desire I had
Of tasting those fair apples, I resolved
Not to defer, hunger and thirst at once,

558 **The latter I demur** As for the question of beasts lacking sense, I have my
doubts. 560 cf. 86 576 **far distant** a standard combination, in, 428, 501, 621; iv, 453;
vi, 551 576—77 **tree . . . Loaden with fruit** cf. iv, 147; viii, 306—07 581 **fennel**
This vegetable was supposed to be a favorite with snakes, as helping them to shed
their skins and to clear their sight.

Powerful persuaders, quickened at the scent
Of that alluring fruit, urged me so keen.
About the mossy trunk I wound me soon,
For, high from ground, the branches would require
Thy utmost reach, or Adam's: round the tree
All other beasts that saw, with like desire
Longing and envying stood, but could not reach.
Amid the tree now got, where plenty hung
Tempting so nigh, to pluck and eat° my fill
I spared not, for such pleasure till that hour
At feed or fountain never had I found.
Sated at length, ere long I might perceive
Strange alteration° in me, to degree

Of reason in my inward powers, and speech
 Wanted not long, though to this shape retained.
 Thenceforth to speculations high or deep
 I turned my thoughts, and with capacious mind
 Considered all things visible in Heaven,
 Or Earth, or Middle,^o all things fair and good.
 But all that fair and good in thy divine
 Semblance, and in thy beauty's heavenly ray,
 United I beheld—no fair to thine
 Equivalent or second, which compelled
 Me thus, though importune perhaps, to come
 And gaze, and worship thee of right declared
 Sovran of creatures, universal Dame.'^o

So talked the spirited^o sly Snake, and Eve,
 Yet more amazed, unwary thus replied:

'Serpent, thy overpraising leaves in doubt
 The virtue of that fruit, in thee first proved.
 But say, where grows the tree? from hence how far?
 For many are the trees of God that grow
 In Paradise, and various, yet unknown
 To us; in such abundance lies our choice
 As leaves a greater store of fruit untouched,
 Still hanging incorruptible, till men
 Grow up to their provision, and more hands

595 to pluck and eat cf. viii; 309 599 **Strange alteration** cf. ii, 1024 605 **Middle**
 air 612 **universal Dame** Lady (Latin *domina*) of the universe 613 **spirited** i.e.,
 possessed by a demon. Note the hissing sibilance.

Help to disburden Nature of her birth.'^o

To whom the wily Adder, blithe and glad:

'Empress, the way is ready, and not long:
 Beyond a row of myrtles, on a flat,
 Fast by a fountain, one small thicket past
 Of blowing^o myrrh and balm;^o if thou accept
 My conduct, I can bring thee thither soon.'

'Lead, then,' said Eve. He, leading, swiftly rolled
 In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
 To mischief swift. Hope elevates, and joy
 Brightens his crest, as when a wandering fire,^o
 Compact of^o unctuous vapour, which the night
 Condenses, and the cold environs round,
 Kindled through agitation to a flame
 (Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends),
 Hovering and blazing with delusive light,
 Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way^o
 To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool,
 There swallowed up and lost, from succour far,
 So glistered the dire Snake, and into fraud
 Led Eve, our credulous mother, to the Tree
 Of Prohibition, root^o of all our woe;
 Which when she saw, thus to her guide she spake:

'Serpent, we might have spared our coming hither,
 Fruitless to me, though fruit be here to excess,
 The credit of whose virtue rest with thee—
 Wondrous, indeed, if cause of such effects.
 But of this tree we may not taste nor touch;
 God so commanded, and left that command
 Sole daughter of his voice: the rest,^o we live
 Law to our selves; our reason is our law.'^o

To whom the Tempter guilefully replied:
 'Indeed? Hath God then said that of the fruit
 Of all these garden-trees ye shall not eat,

624 **birth** in the original editions *beareth*, which shows the meaning—what Nature bears, produce 629 **blowing** blooming **balm** balsam tree 634 **wandering fire** will-o'-the-wisp 635 **Compact of** composed of 640 Puck in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (II, i, 39) is said to "Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm." 645 **root** a pun (cf. 648) 653 **the rest** Latin construction for "as to the rest" 654 "These are a law unto themselves" (Rom. ii, 14).

Yet lords declared of all in earth or air?'

To whom thus Eve, yet sinless: 'Of the fruit
Of each tree in the garden we may eat,
But of the fruit of this fair tree, amidst
The garden, God hath said, "Ye shall not eat
Thereof, nor shall ye touch it, lest ye die." '

She scarce had said, though brief, when now more bold
The Tempter, but with show of zeal and love
To Man, and indignation at his wrong,
New part puts on, and, as to passion moved,
Fluctuates disturbed, yet comely, and in act
Raised as of some great matter to begin.
As when of old some orator renowned
In Athens or free Rome, where eloquence
Flourished, since mute, to some great cause addressed,
Stood in himself collected,^o while each part,
Motion, each act, won audience ere the tongue
Sometimes in height began, as no delay
Of preface brooking through his zeal of right:
So standing, moving, or to height upgrown,
The Tempter, all impassioned, thus began:

'O sacred, wise, and wisdom-giving Plant,
Mother of science,^o now I feel thy power
Within me clear, not only to discern
Things in their causes,^o but to trace the ways
Of highest agents, deemed however wise.
Queen of this Universe, do not believe
Those rigid threats of death; ye shall not die.^o
How should ye? by the fruit? it gives you life
To knowledge; by the Threatener? look on me,
Me who have touched and tasted, yet both live
And life more perfect have attained than Fate
Meant me, by venturing higher than my lot.
Shall that be shut to Man which to the beast
Is open? or will God incense his ire
For such a petty trespass, and not praise

673 **Stood in himself collected** an Italian idiom indicating complete self-possession
680 **science** knowledge 680-82 **power . . . to discern/ Things in their causes** a
phrase based on Virgil's *Georgics* (II, 490) 685 "And the serpent said unto the
woman, Ye shall not surely die" (Gen. iii, 4).

Rather your dauntless virtue, whom the pain
Of death denounced, whatever thing Death be,
Deterred not from achieving what might lead
To happier life, knowledge of good and evil?
Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil
Be real, why not known, since easier shunned?
God, therefore, cannot hurt ye, and be just;
Not just, not God; not feared^o then, nor obeyed:
Your fear itself of death removes the fear.^o
Why, then, was this forbid? Why but to awe?
Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
His worshippers? He knows that in the day
Ye eat thereof your eyes, that seem so clear
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then

Opened and cleared, and ye shall be as Gods,
 Knowing both good and evil, as they know.
 That ye should be as Gods, since I as Man,
 Internal Man, is but proportion meet;
 I, of brute, human: ye, of human, Gods.^o
 So ye shall die perhaps, by putting off
 Human, to put on Gods—death to be wished,
 Though threatened, which no worse than this can bring.
 And what are Gods, that Man may not become
 As they, participating godlike food?
 The Gods are first, and that advantage use
 On our belief, that all from them proceeds.
 I question it, for this fair Earth I see,
 Warmed by the Sun, producing every kind,
 Them nothing. If they all things, who enclosed
 Knowledge of good and evil^o in this tree,
 That whoso eats thereof forthwith attains
 Wisdom without their leave? and wherein lies
 The offence, that Man should thus attain to know?
 What can your knowledge hurt him, or this tree
 Impart against his will, if all be his?
 Or is it envy? and can envy dwell

701 **not feared** not to be feared 701—02 The line of reasoning is that he who is not
 just is not God and consequently lacks the power to bring death to mankind. 710—
 12 An inference Adam repeats, 932—37. 723 **Knowledge of good and evil** cf. 697;
 vii, 543; also iv, 222; viii, 324; xi, 87

In heavenly breasts?^o These, these and many more
 Causes import your need of this fair fruit.
 Goddess humane, reach, then, and freely taste.[’]
 He ended, and his words, replete with guile,
 Into her heart too easy entrance won:
 Fixed on the fruit she gazed, which to behold
 Might tempt alone, and in her ears the sound
 Yet rung of his persuasive words, impregn^o
 With reason, to her seeming, and with truth.
 Meanwhile the hour of noon drew on, and waked
 An eager appetite, raised by the smell
 So savory of that fruit, which with desire,^o
 Inclinal now grown to touch or taste,
 Solicited her longing eye; yet first,
 Pausing a while, thus to herself she mused:
 ‘Great are thy virtues, doubtless, best of fruits,
 Though kept from Man, and worthy to be admired,
 Whose taste, too long forborne, at first assay
 Gave elocution to the mute, and taught
 The tongue not made for speech to speak thy praise.
 Thy praise he also who forbids thy use
 Conceals not from us, naming thee the Tree
 Of Knowledge, knowledge both of good and evil;
 Forbids us then to taste;^o but his forbidding
 Commends thee more, while it infers the good
 By thee communicated, and our want;
 For good unknown sure is not had, or, had
 And yet unknown, is as not had at all.
 In plain, then, what forbids he but to know,
 Forbids us good, forbids us to be wise?
 Such prohibitions bind not. But, if Death
 Bind us with after-bands, what profits then
 Our inward freedom? In the day we eat
 Of this fair fruit, our doom is we shall die.
 How dies the Serpent? He hath eaten, and lives,

And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns,
Irrational till then. For us alone
Was death invented? or to us denied

729-30 cf. the note to vi, 788 737 **impregnated** impregnated 741 **with desire** “a tree to be desired” (Gen. iii, 6) 753 **Forbids . . . to taste** cf. v, 61

This intellectual food, for beasts reserved?
For beasts it seems, yet that one beast which first
Hath tasted envies not, but brings with joy
The good befallen him, author unsuspect,^o
Friendly to Man, far from deceit or guile.
What fear I, then? rather, what know to fear
Under this ignorance of good and evil,
Of God or Death, of law or penalty?
Here grows the cure of all, this fruit divine,
Fair to the eye, inviting to the taste,
Of virtue to make wise. What hinders, then,
To reach, and feed at once both body and mind?’

So saying, her rash hand in evil hour
Forth-reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat;^o
Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat,
Sighing through all her works, gave signs^o of woe
That all was lost. Back to the thicket slunk
The guilty Serpent, and well might, for Eve,
Intent now wholly on her taste, naught else
Regarded; such delight till then, as seemed,
In fruit she never tasted, whether true
Or fancied so through expectation high
Of knowledge; nor was Godhead from her thought.
Greedily she engorged without restraint,^o

771 **author unsuspect** authority not to be suspected 781 **eat** pronounced “ate” in Milton’s day and rhyming with “seat” in the next line 783 **Sighing . . . signs** alliterative wordplay 791 It was Milton’s view, which he demonstrated in his text, that the sin of eating of the fruit was “manifold” (x, 16), embraced all seven deadly sins: here for instance is gluttony. And when the concupiscent idlers lie down by “a shady bank,” 1037 ff., they illustrate lust and sloth. Milton’s words in I, xi, of his *Christian Doctrine* are: “at once distrust of the divine veracity, and a proportionate credulity in the assurances of Satan; unbelief; ingratitude; disobedience; gluttony; in the man excessive uxoriousness, in the woman a want of proper regard for her husband, in both an insensibility to the welfare of their offspring, and that offspring the whole human race; parricide, theft, invasion of the rights of others, sacrilege, deceit, presumption in aspiring to divine attributes, fraud in the means employed to attain the object, pride, and arrogance.” To this indictment is to be added premeditated murder, 826 ff. The sprig that Eve brings to her husband is a poison, and a part of her knows it.

And knew not eating death. Sate at length,
And heightened as with wine,^o jocund and boon,^o
Thus to herself she pleasingly began:
‘O sovran, virtuous, precious of all trees
In Paradise, of operation blest
To sapience, hitherto obscured, infamed,
And thy fair fruit let hang, as to no end
Created, but henceforth my early care,
Not without song, each morning, and due praise,
Shall tend thee, and the fertile burden ease
Of thy full branches, offered free to all,
Till, dieted by thee, I grow mature
In knowledge, as the Gods who all things know,
Though others envy what they cannot give—
For, had the gift been theirs, it had not here
Thus grown. Experience,^o next to thee I owe,

Best guide: not following thee, I had remained
 In ignorance; thou open'st Wisdom's way,
 And giv'st access, though secret she retire.
 And I perhaps am secret:° Heaven is high—
 High, and remote to see from thence distinct
 Each thing on Earth; and other care perhaps
 May have diverted from continual watch
 Our great Forbidder, safe° with all his spies
 About him. But to Adam in what sort
 Shall I appear? Shall I to him make known
 As yet my change, and give him to partake
 Full happiness with me, or rather not,
 But keep the odds of knowledge in my power
 Without co-partner? so to add what wants
 In female sex, the more to draw his love,
 And render me more equal, and perhaps,
 A thing not undesirable, sometime
 Superior—for, inferior, who is free?
 This may be well; but what if God have seen,
 And death ensue? Then I shall be no more,
 And Adam, wedded to another Eve,

793 The fruit in its effect on both Eve and Adam is as an intoxicant; cf. 1008 (and incidentally an aphrodisiac). **boon** gay, as in boon companion 807 **Experience** experiment 811 **secret** hidden 815 **safe** harmless

Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct—
 A death to think. Confirmed, then, I resolve
 Adam shall share with me in bliss or woe.
 So dear I love him that with him all deaths
 I could endure, without him live no life.'°
 So saying, from the tree her step she turned,
 But first low reverence done, as to the Power
 That dwelt within,° whose presence had infused
 Into the plant sciential° sap, derived
 From nectar, drink of Gods. Adam the while,
 Waiting desirous her return, had wove°
 Of choicest flowers a garland, to adorn
 Her tresses and her rural labours crown,
 As reapers oft are wont their harvest-queen.
 Great joy he promised to his thoughts, and new
 Solace in her return, so long delayed;
 Yet oft his heart, divine of° something ill,
 Misgave him. He the faltering measure felt,
 And forth to meet her went, the way she took
 That morn when first they parted; by the Tree
 Of Knowledge he must pass; there he her met,
 Scarce from the tree returning, in her hand
 A bough of fairest fruit, that downy smiled,
 New gathered, and ambrosial smell diffused.°
 To him she hasted; in her face Excuse
 Came prologue, and apology to prompt,
 Which, with bland words at will, she thus addressed:
 'Hast thou not wondered, Adam, at my stay?
 Thee I have missed, and thought it long, deprived
 Thy presence, agony of love till now
 Not felt, nor shall be twice, for never more
 Mean I to try, what rash untried I sought,
 The pain of absence from thy sight. But strange
 Hath been the cause, and wonderful to hear:

832-33 This romantic sentiment actually comes from Horace (*Carm.* III, ix, 24). 835 ff. Eve has fallen to totemism. 835-36 **Power** . . . **within** cf. 95-96, 680-81 837

sciential yielding knowledge 839 ff. So Hector's wife, not knowing that he had been slain, embroidered flowers while waiting for his return, *Iliad*, XXII, 437 ff. 845
divine of foreboding (like the verb) 852 **ambrosial smell diffused** *ambrosiae diffundit odorem* (*Georg.*, IV, 415)

This tree is not, as we are told, a tree
 Of danger tasted, nor to evil unknown
 Opening the way, but of divine effect
 To open eyes, and make them Gods who taste;
 And hath been tasted such. The Serpent wise,
 Or not restrained as we or not obeying,
 Hath eaten of the fruit, and is become,
 Not dead, as we are threatened, but thenceforth
 Endued with human voice and human sense,
 Reasoning to admiration, and with me
 Persuasively hath so prevailed that I
 Have also tasted, and have also found
 The effects to correspond—opener mine eyes,
 Dim erst, dilated spirits, ampler heart.
 And growing up to Godhead; which for thee
 Chiefly I sought, without thee can despise.
 For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss,
 Tedious, unshared with thee, and odious soon.
 Thou, therefore, also taste, that equal lot
 May join us, equal joy, as equal love,
 Lest, thou not tasting, different degree
 Disjoin us, and I then too late renounce
 Deity for thee, when Fate will not permit.'°

Thus Eve, with countenance blithe, her story told,
 But in her cheek distemper flushing glowed.
 On the other side, Adam, soon as he heard
 The fatal trespass done by Eve, amazed,
 Astonied, stood and blank, while horror chill°
 Ran through his veins, and all his joints relaxed.
 From his slack hand the garland wreathed for Eve
 Down dropped, and all the faded roses shed.
 Speechless he stood and pale, till thus at length
 First to himself he inward silence broke:

‘O fairest of creation, last and best
 Of all God's works, creature in whom excelled
 Whatever can to sight or thought be formed,
 Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet!
 How art thou lost, how on a sudden lost,
 Defaced, deflowered, and now to death devote?°

883-85 deluding and deluded. 890 **horror chill** another Virgilian phrase (*Aen.* III, 29), *frigidus horror* 901 **to death devote** an Horatian Latinism

Rather, how hast thou yielded to transgress
 The strict forbiddance, how to violate
 The sacred fruit forbidden? Some cursed fraud
 Of enemy hath beguiled thee, yet unknown,
 And me with thee hath ruined; for with thee
 Certain my resolution is to die.
 How can I live without thee? how forgo
 Thy sweet converse and love so dearly joined,
 To live again in these wild woods forlorn?
 Should God create another Eve, and I
 Another rib afford, yet loss of thee
 Would never from my heart. No, no! I feel
 The link of nature draw me: flesh of flesh,
 Bone of my bone thou art,° and from thy state
 Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.’

So having said, as one from sad dismay
Recomforted, and, after thoughts disturbed,
Submitting to what seemed remediless,
Thus in calm mood his words to Eve he turned:

‘Bold deed thou hast presumed, adventurous Eve,
And peril great provoked, who thus hast dared,^o
Had it been only coveting to eye
That sacred fruit,^o sacred to abstinence,
Much more to taste it, under ban to touch.
But past who can recall, or done undo?
Not God Omnipotent, nor Fate; yet so
Perhaps^o thou shalt not die; perhaps the fact^o
Is not so heinous now, foretasted fruit,

914-15 cf. viii, 495. St. Augustine commented: “so we cannot believe that Adam was deceived, and supposed the devil’s word to be truth, and therefore transgressed God’s law, but that he by the drawings of kindred yielded to the woman, the husband to the wife, the one human being to the only other human being . . . the man could not bear to be severed from his only companion, even though this involved a partnership in sin . . . he was possibly deceived in so far as he thought his sin venial” (*City of God*, XIV, xi). 922 **hast dared** 1674 has *hath*, and the early editions put a comma after *dared*, but the infinitive construction—“to eye,” etc.—is tighter. 924 **sacred fruit** (in the Latin sense of having a curse on it: a repetition from 904) 928 **Perhaps** a word, *forte*, from the Vulgate version of Genesis, iii, 3 **fact** deed

Profaned first by the Serpent, by him first
Made common and unhallowed ere our taste,
Nor yet on him found deadly; he yet lives—
Lives, as thou saidst, and gains to live, as Man,
Higher degree of life: inducement strong
To us, as likely, tasting, to attain
Proportional ascent; which cannot be
But to be Gods, or Angels, demi-gods.
Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
Though threatening, will in earnest so destroy
Us, his prime creatures, dignified so high,
Set over all his works; which, in our fall,
For us created, needs with us must fail,
Dependent made. So God shall uncreate,
Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour lose,
Not well conceived of God,^o who, though his power
Creation could repeat, yet would be loth
Us to abolish, lest the Adversary
Triumph and say: “Fickle their state whom God^o
Most favours; who can please him long? Me first
He ruined, now Mankind; whom will he next?”—
Matter of scorn not to be given the Foe.
However, I with thee have fixed my lot,
Certain^o to undergo like doom; if death
Consort with thee, death is to me as life,
So forcible within my heart I feel
The bond of Nature draw me to my own;^o
My own in thee, for what thou art is mine.
Our state cannot be severed; we are one,
One flesh; to lose thee were to lose myself.’

So Adam; and thus Eve to him replied:
‘O glorious trial of exceeding love,
Illustrious evidence, example high!
Engaging me to emulate; but, short
Of thy perfection, how shall I attain,
Adam, from whose dear side I boast me sprung,

945 **Not well conceived of God** Adam, though technically not fallen yet, is on the way; he is already a critic. 947-48 “Lest their adversaries should judge amiss, lest they should say, ‘Our hand is triumphant’ ” (Deut. xxxii, 27, Revised Standard Version). 953 **Certain** determined 956 cf. 914

And gladly of our union hear thee speak,
 One heart, one soul° in both; whereof good proof
 This day affords, declaring thee resolved,
 Rather than death, or aught than death more dread,
 Shall separate us, linked in love so dear,
 To undergo with me one guilt, one crime,
 If any be, of tasting this fair fruit,°
 Whose virtue (for of good still good proceeds,
 Direct, or by occasion) hath presented
 This happy trial of thy love, which else
 So eminently never had been known.
 Were it I thought death menaced would ensue°
 This my attempt, I would sustain alone
 The worst, and not persuade thee—rather die
 Deserted than oblige° thee with a fact
 Pernicious to thy peace, chiefly assured
 Remarkably so late of thy so true,
 So faithful, love unequalled. But I feel
 Far otherwise the event: not death, but life
 Augmented, opened eyes, new hopes, new joys,
 Taste so divine that what of sweet before
 Hath touched my sense flat seems to this and harsh.
 On my experience, Adam, freely taste,°
 And fear of death deliver to the winds.’

So saying, she embraced him, and for joy
 Tenderly wept, much won that he his love
 Had so ennobled as of choice to incur
 Divine displeasure for her sake, or death.
 In recompense (for such compliance bad
 Such recompense best merits), from the bough
 She gave him of that fair enticing fruit
 With liberal hand. He scrupled not to eat,
 Against his better knowledge, not deceived,°
 But fondly° overcome with female charm.
 Earth trembled from her entrails, as again
 In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan;
 Sky lowered, and, muttering thunder, some sad drops

967 **one soul** cf. viii, 604 972 **this fair fruit** cf. 731, 763 977-81 This assertion is belied by 826-33. 980 **oblige** entangle in guilt 988 **freely taste** echoing the Serpent (732) 998 “Adam was not deceived” (1 Tim. ii, 14). 999 **fondly** a pun—affectionately and foolishly.

Wept at completing of the mortal sin
 Original; while Adam took no thought,
 Eating his fill, nor Eve to iterate
 Her former trespass feared, the more to soothe
 Him with her loved society; that now,
 As with new wine intoxicated both,
 They swim in mirth, and fancy that they feel
 Divinity within them breeding wings
 Wherewith to scorn the Earth: but that false fruit
 Far other operations first displayed,
 Carnal desire inflaming; he on Eve
 Began to cast lascivious eyes; she him
 As wantonly repaid; in lust they burn,
 Till Adam thus ’gan Eve to dalliance move:

'Eve, now I see thou art exact of taste^o
 And elegant, of sapience no small part,
 Since to each meaning savour we^o apply,
 And palate call judicious. I the praise
 Yield thee, so well this day thou hast purveyed.
 Much pleasure we have lost while we abstained
 From this delightful fruit, nor known till now
 True relish, tasting. If such pleasure^o be
 In things to us forbidden, it might be wished
 For this one tree had been forbidden ten.
 But come; so well refreshed, now let us play,^o
 As meet is, after such delicious fare;
 For never did thy beauty, since the day
 I saw thee first and wedded thee, adorned
 With all perfections, so inflame my sense
 With ardour to enjoy thee, fairer now
 Than ever, bounty of this virtuous tree.'

So said he, and forbore not glance or toy^o
 Of amorous intent, well understood
 Of Eve, whose eye darted contagious fire.
 Her hand he seized, and to a shady bank,^o

1017 **taste** a pun 1019 **we** 1674 misprints *me* 1024 **such pleasure** cf. 455, 596; viii,
 50 1027 ff. There is an odd reminiscence of the *Iliad* here (XIV, 292-353). Adam
 gazes on Eve as if she were Hera equipped with Aphrodite's girdle, and he says to
 her what Zeus said on that deceitful but sensually memorable occasion. The hyacinth
 —1041—helped make up the flowery bed of both couples. 1034 **toy** caress 1037
shady bank cf. viii, 286

Thick overhead with verdant roof embowered,
 He led her, nothing loth; flowers were the couch,
 Pansies, and violets, and asphodel,
 And hyacinth—Earth's freshest, softest lap.
 There they their fill of love and love's disport^o
 Took largely, of their mutual guilt the seal,
 The solace of their sin, till dewy sleep
 Oppressed them, wearied with their amorous play.
 Soon as the force of that fallacious fruit,
 That with exhilarating vapour bland
 About their spirits had played, and inmost powers
 Made err, was now exhaled, and grosser sleep,^o
 Bred of unkindly^o fumes, with conscious dreams
 Encumbered, now had left them, up they rose
 As from unrest, and, each the other viewing,
 Soon found their eyes how opened, and their minds
 How darkened; innocence, that as a veil
 Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone;
 Just confidence, and native righteousness,
 And honour, from about them, naked left
 To guilty shame:^o he covered, but his robe
 Uncovered more. So rose the Danite strong,
 Herculean Samson, from the harlot-lap
 Of Philistean Dalilah, and waked
 Shorn of his strength; they destitute and bare
 Of all their virtue. Silent, and in face
 Confounded, long they sat, as stricken^o mute;
 Till Adam, though not less than Eve abashed,
 At length gave utterance to these words constrained:

'O Eve, in evil hour^o thou didst give ear
 To that false Worm, of whomsoever taught
 To counterfeit Man's voice—true in our fall,
 False in our promised rising; since our eyes
 Opened we find indeed, and find we know

1042 “Come, let us take our fill of love until the morning; let us solace ourselves with loves” (Prov. vii, 18). 1049 **grosser sleep** contrast v, 3-5 1050 **unkindly** not natural 1058 **guilty shame** cf. iv, 313 (the anatomical pun is familiar in German) 1064 **stricken** *struck* ’n in the original editions 1067 **in evil hour** a pun repeated from 780

Both good and evil,° good lost and evil got:
 Bad fruit° of knowledge, if this be to know,
 Which leaves us naked thus, of honour void,
 Of innocence, of faith, of purity,
 Our wonted ornaments now soiled and stained,
 And in our faces evident the signs
 Of foul concupiscence, whence evil store,
 Even shame, the last° of evils—of the first
 Be sure then. How shall I behold the face
 Henceforth of God or Angel, erst with joy
 And rapture so oft beheld? Those heavenly shapes
 Will dazzle now this earthly with their blaze
 Insufferably bright. Oh, might I here
 In solitude live savage, in some glade
 Obscured, where highest woods, impenetrable
 To star or sunlight, spread their umbrage broad,
 And brown° as evening: Cover me, ye pines,
 Ye cedars, with innumerable boughs
 Hide me, where I may never see them more.
 But let us now, as in bad plight, devise
 What best may, for the present, serve to hide
 The parts of each from° other that seem most
 To shame obnoxious, and unseemliest seen—
 Some tree, whose broad smooth leaves, together sewed,
 And girded on our loins, may cover round
 Those middle parts, that this new comer, Shame,
 There sit not, and reproach us as unclean.’

So counselled he, and both together went
 Into the thickest wood; there soon they chose
 The fig-tree—not that kind for fruit renowned,°
 But such as at this day, to Indians known,
 In Malabar or Deccan spreads her arms
 Branching so broad and long that in the ground
 The bended twigs take root, and daughters grow

1072 **good and evil** perhaps “an error of the scribe or the printer for *evil and good*, which gives a better verse” (Robert Bridges) 1073 **fruit** used with a double meaning, as at i, 1 1079 **the last** the most extreme 1088 **brown** dark, as in “Lycidas.” 2. 1092-93 **for and from** were interchanged in 1674. 1101—1111 It has long been known that Milton based his description of the arched Indian fig tree on Gerard’s *Herbal*, 1597, 1634.

About the mother tree, a pillared shade
 High overarched,° and echoing walks between:
 There oft the Indian herdsman, shunning heat,
 Shelters in cool, and tends his pasturing herds
 At loop-holes cut through thickest shade:° Those leaves
 They gathered, broad as Amazonian targe,°
 And with what skill they had together sewed,°
 To gird their waist—vain covering, if to hide
 Their guilt and dreaded shame; O how unlike
 To that first naked glory. Such of late
 Columbus found the American so girt
 With feathered cincture,° naked else and wild
 Among the trees on isles and woody shores.
 Thus fenced, and, as they thought, their shame in part
 Covered, but not at rest or ease of mind,

They sat them down to weep. Nor only tears
 Rained at their eyes, but high winds worse within
 Began to rise, high passions—anger, hate,
 Mistrust, suspicion, discord—and shook sore
 Their inward state of mind, calm region once
 And full of peace, now tossed and turbulent:
 For Understanding ruled not, and the Will^o
 Heard not her lore, but in subjection now
 To sensual Appetite, who, from beneath
 Usurping over sovran Reason, claimed
 Superior sway. From thus distempered breast
 Adam, estranged in look and altered style,
 Speech intermitted thus to Eve renewed:

‘Would thou hadst hearkened to my words, and stayed
 With me, as I besought thee, when that strange
 Desire of wandering, this unhappy morn,
 I know not whence possessed thee; we had then
 Remained still happy, not, as now, despoiled
 Of all our good, shamed, naked, miserable.

1107 **High overarched** cf. i, 304 1110 **thickest shade** cf. iv, 532; viii, 653 1111
Amazonian targe shield such as that carried by one of the fabulous female warriors,
 the Amazons, “crescent-shaped” in *Aeneid*, I, 490. 1112 **together sewed** going back
 to 1095 1117 **With feathered cincture** This notion that the Indians were so girt
 follows decorations and illustrations in Renaissance geographies and maps, and
 Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, III, xii, 8. 1127-31 cf. 351-56

Let none henceforth seek needless cause to approve
 The faith they owe; when earnestly they seek
 Such proof, conclude they then begin to fail.’

To whom, soon moved with touch of blame, thus Eve:
 ‘What words have passed thy lips, Adam severe,
 Imput’st thou that to my default, or will
 Of wandering, as thou call’st it, which who knows
 But might as ill have happened thou being by,
 Or to thyself perhaps: hadst thou been there,
 Or here the attempt, thou couldst not have discerned
 Fraud in the Serpent, speaking as he spake;
 No ground of enmity between us known
 Why he should mean me ill or seek to harm.
 Was I to have never parted from thy side?
 As good have grown there still, a lifeless rib.
 Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
 Command me absolutely not to go,
 Going into such danger, as thou saidst?
 Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay,
 Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
 Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent,
 Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me.’

To whom, then first incensed, Adam replied:
 ‘Is this the love, is this the recompense
 Of mine to thee, ingrateful Eve, expressed
 Immutable when thou wert lost, not I,
 Who might have lived, and joyed immortal bliss,
 Yet willingly chose rather death with thee?
 And am I now upbraided as the cause
 Of thy transgressing? not enough severe,
 It seems, in thy restraint. What could I more?
 I warned thee, I admonished thee, foretold
 The danger and the lurking enemy
 That lay in wait; beyond this had been force,
 And force upon free will hath here no place.
 But confidence then bore thee on, secure

Either to meet no danger or to find
Matter of glorious trial;^o and perhaps
I also erred in overmuch admiring
What seemed to thee so perfect that I thought

1177 **glorious trial** cf. 961

No evil durst attempt thee—but I rue
That error now, which is become my crime,
And thou the accuser. Thus it shall befall
Him who, to worth in women^o overtrusting,
Lest her will rule: restraint she will not brook,
And, left to herself, if evil thence ensue,
She first his weak indulgence will accuse.’

Thus they in mutual accusation spent
The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning,
And of their vain contest appeared no end.

1183 **women** It has been conjectured that Milton dictated the singular, but he may well have slipped into the plural since he knew so many instances.

BOOK X

THE ARGUMENT

Man's transgression known, the guardian Angels forsake Paradise and return up to Heaven to approve their vigilance, and are approved, God declaring that the entrance of Satan could not be by them prevented. He sends his Son to judge the transgressors, who descends and gives sentence accordingly; then, in pity, clothes them both, and reascends. Sin and Death sitting till then at the gates of Hell, by wondrous sympathy feeling the success of Satan in this new World, and the sin by Man there committed, resolve to sit no longer confined in Hell, but to follow Satan, their sire, up to the place of Man; to make the way easier from Hell to this World to and fro, they pave a broad highway or bridge over Chaos, according to the track that Satan first made; then, preparing for Earth, they meet him, proud of his success, returning to Hell; their mutual gratulation. Satan arrives at Pandemonium, in full assembly relates with boasting his success against Man; instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transformed, with himself also, suddenly into Serpents, according to his doom given in Paradise; then, deluded with a show of the Forbidden Tree springing up before them, they, greedily reaching to take of the fruit, chew dust and bitter ashes. The proceedings of Sin and Death: God foretells the final victory of his Son over them, and the renewing of all things, but, for the present, commands his Angels to make several alterations in the Heavens and Elements. Adam, more and more perceiving his fallen condition, heavily bewails, rejects the condolment of Eve; she persists, and at length appeases him; then, to evade the curse likely to fall on their offspring, proposes to Adam violent ways; which he approves not, but, conceiving better hope, puts her in mind of the late promise made them that her seed should be revenged on the Serpent, and exhorts her, with him, to seek peace of the offended Deity by repentance and supplication.

MEANWHILE the heinous and despicable act
Of Satan done in Paradise, and how
He, in the Serpent, had perverted Eve,
Her husband she, to taste the fatal fruit,
Was known in Heaven,^o for what can 'scape the eye
Of God all-seeing or deceive his heart
Omniscient, who, in all things wise and just,
Hindered not Satan to attempt the mind
Of Man, with strength entire^o and free will armed
Complete to have discovered and repulsed
Whatever wiles of foe or seeming friend.
For still they knew, and ought to have still remembered,
The high injunction not to taste that fruit,
Whoever tempted; which they not obeying
Incurred (what could they less?) the penalty,
And, manifold in sin, deserved to fall.
Up into Heaven from Paradise in haste
The Angelic guards^o ascended, mute and sad
For Man, for of his state by this they knew,
Much wondering how the subtle Fiend^o had stolen
Entrance unseen. Soon as the unwelcome news
From Earth arrived at Heaven-gate, displeased
All were who heard; dim sadness did not spare
That time celestial visages, yet, mixed
With pity, violated not their bliss.
About the new-arrived, in multitudes,
The ethereal people ran, to hear and know
How all befell. They towards the throne supreme,
Accountable, made haste to make appear,
With righteous plea, their utmost vigilance,
And easily approved; when the Most High
Eternal Father,^o from his secret cloud

Amidst, in thunder uttered thus his voice:
‘Assembled Angels, and ye Powers returned
From unsuccessful charge, be not dismayed
Nor troubled at these tidings from the Earth
Which your sincerest care could not prevent,

5 **Was known in Heaven** cf. i, 732-33 9 **strength entire** cf. i, 146 18 **The Angelic guards** cf. iv, 550 20 **the subtle Fiend** cf. ii, 815 32 **Eternal Father** cf. 68 and v, 246; vi, 96; vii, 137, 517

Foretold so lately what would come to pass,
When first this Tempter crossed the gulf from Hell.
I told ye then he should prevail, and speed
On his bad errand°—Man should be seduced
And flattered out of all, believing lies
Against his Maker, no decree of mine
Concurring to necessitate his fall,
Or touch with lightest moment° of impulse
His free will, to her own inclining left
In even scale. But fallen he is, and now
What rests° but that the mortal sentence pass
On his transgression, Death denounced that day,
Which he presumes already vain and void
Because not yet inflicted, as he feared,
By some immediate stroke, but soon shall find
Forbearance no acquittance ere day end.
Justice shall not return, as bounty, scorned.°
But whom send I to judge them? Whom but thee,
Vicegerent Son; to thee I have transferred
All judgement, whether in Heaven, or Earth, or Hell.°
Easy it may be seen that I intend
Mercy colleague with justice, sending thee,
Man’s friend, his Mediator, his designed
Both ransom and Redeemer voluntary
And destined Man himself to judge Man fallen.’

So spake the Father, and, unfolding bright
Toward the right hand his glory, on the Son
Blazed forth unclouded deity. He full
Resplendent all his Father manifest
Expressed, and thus divinely answered mild:
‘Father Eternal, thine is to decree,
Mine both in Heaven and Earth to do thy will
Supreme, that thou in me, thy Son beloved,°
May’st ever rest well pleased. I go to judge
On Earth these thy transgressors; but thou know’st,
Whoever judged, the worst on me must light,
When Time shall be; for so I undertook

41 **bad errand** cf. iv, 795 45 **moment** momentum 48 **rests** remains 54 Justice shall not return scorned, as bounty has been. 55-57 ‘For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son’ (John, v. 22). 70 **Son beloved** cf. vi, 680

Before thee and,° not repenting, this obtain
Of right, that I may mitigate their doom
On me derived;° yet I shall temper so
Justice with mercy as may illustrate most°
Them° fully satisfied,° and thee appease.
Attendance none shall need, nor train, where none
Are to behold the judgement but the judged,
Those two; the third best absent is condemned,
Convict° by flight, and rebel to all law;
Conviction to the Serpent none belongs.’°

Thus saying, from his radiant seat he rose
Of high collateral° glory. Him° Thrones and Powers,

Princedoms, and Dominations, ministrant,
 Accompanied to Heaven-gate, from whence
 Eden and all the coast in prospect lay.
 Down he descended straight; the speed of Gods
 Time counts not, though with swiftest minutes winged.
 Now was the Sun in western cadence° low
 From noon, and gentle airs° due at their hour
 To fan the Earth now waked, and usher in
 The evening° cool,° when he, from wrath more cool,
 Came, the mild judge and intercessor both,
 To sentence Man: the voice of God they heard
 Now walking in the Garden, by soft winds
 Brought to their ears, while day declined; they heard,
 And from his presence hid themselves among
 The thickest trees, both man and wife, till God,
 Approaching, thus to Adam called aloud:
 ‘Where art thou, Adam, wont with joy to meet
 My coming, seen far off? I miss thee here,
 Not pleased, thus entertained with solitude,
 Where obvious duty erewhile appeared unsought.
 Or come I less conspicuous, or what change
 Absents thee, or what chance detains? Come forth.’

75 **thee** and elide to scan 77 **derived** turned aside 77-78 In Portia’s famous speech,
 “When mercy seasons justice” (*Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 197) 79 **Them** Justice and
 Mercy **fully satisfied** cf. viii, 180 83 **Convict** convicted 84 It is unnecessary to
 prove the serpent’s guilt. 86 **collateral** see viii, 426 **glory. Him** elide 92 **cadence**
 descent 93 **gentle airs** cf. viii, 515 94-95 **usher . . . evening** cf. iv, 355 95 Genesis
 gave the first “cool” (iii, 8); Milton could not resist the other.

He came, and with him Eve, more loth, though first
 To offend, discountenanced both, and discomposed;
 Love was not in their looks, either to God
 Or to each other, but apparent guilt,
 And shame, and perturbation, and despair,
 Anger, and obstinacy, and hate, and guile.
 Whence Adam, faltering long, thus answered brief:
 ‘I heard thee in the garden, and, of thy voice
 Afraid, being naked, hid myself.’ To whom
 The gracious Judge, without revile, replied:
 ‘My voice thou oft hast heard, and hast not feared,°
 But still rejoiced; how is it now become
 So dreadful to thee? That thou art naked who
 Hath told thee? Hast thou eaten of the tree
 Whereof I gave thee charge thou shouldst not eat?’
 To whom thus Adam, sore beset, replied:
 ‘O Heaven! in evil strait this day I stand
 Before my Judge, either to undergo
 Myself the total crime, or to accuse
 My other self,° the partner of my life,
 Whose failing, while her faith to me remains,
 I should conceal, and not expose to blame
 By my complaint. But strict necessity°
 Subdues me, and calamitous constraint,
 Lest on my head both sin and punishment,
 However insupportable, be all
 Devolved; though, should I hold my peace, yet thou
 Wouldst easily detect what I conceal.
 This Woman, whom thou mad’st to be my help,
 And gav’st me as thy perfect gift, so good,
 So fit, so acceptable, so divine,
 That from her hand I could suspect no ill,
 And what she did, whatever in itself,

Her doing seemed to justify the deed—
She gave me of the tree, and I did eat.’°

To whom the Sovran Presence thus replied:

119 Contrast the other “voice . . . heard so oft,” associated with “fears,” i, 274-75.

128 **My other self** cf. viii, 450 131 **strict necessity** cf. v, 528. 131-32 is comparable to “Lycidas,” 6—7, and there is even rhyme: *complaint* and *constraint*. 143 Genesis, iii, 12.

‘Was she thy God, that her thou didst obey
Before his voice? or was she made thy guide,
Superior, or but equal, that to her
Thou didst resign thy manhood, and the place
Wherein God set thee above her, made of thee
And for thee, whose perfection far excelled
Hers in all real dignity? Adorned
She was indeed, and lovely, to attract
Thy love, not thy subjection, and her gifts
Were such as under government well seemed,
Unseemly to bear rule,° which was thy part
And person,° hadst thou known thyself aright.’

So having said, he thus to Eve in few:

‘Say, Woman, what is this which thou hast done?’

To whom sad Eve, with shame nigh overwhelmed,
Confessing soon, yet not before her Judge
Bold or loquacious, thus abashed replied:
‘The Serpent me beguiled, and I did eat.’°

Which when the Lord God heard, without delay
To judgement he proceeded on the accused
Serpent, though brute, unable° to transfer
The guilt on him who made him instrument
Of mischief, and polluted from the end
Of his creation—justly then accursed,
As vitiated in nature: more to know
Concerned not Man (since he no further knew)
Nor altered his offence, yet God at last
To Satan, first in sin, his doom applied,
Though in mysterious terms, judged as then best:
And on the Serpent thus his curse let fall:

‘Because thou hast done this, thou art accursed°
Above all cattle, each beast of the field;°
Upon thy belly grovelling thou shalt go,
And dust shalt eat all the days of thy life.
Between thee and the Woman I will put
Enmity, and between thine and her seed;
Her seed shall bruise thy head, thou bruise his heel.’

155 **bear rule** cf. viii, 375 156 **person** role 162 Genesis, iii, 13, except for a transposition for metrical reasons. 165 **unable** uncertain reference—to the Serpent, or to the Son? 175—81 There is some metrical lameness here because of the poet’s close adherence to Genesis, iii, 14-15. 176 **beast of the field** cf. vii, 522

So spake his oracle, then verified
When Jesus, son of Mary, second Eve,°
Saw Satan fall like lightning down from Heaven,
Prince of the Air,° then, rising from his grave,
Spoiled Principalities and Powers, triumphed
In open show, and, with ascension bright,°
Captivity led captive through the Air,°
The realm itself of Satan, long usurped,
Whom he shall tread at last under our feet,°
Even he who now foretold his fatal bruise,
And to the Woman thus his sentence turned:

‘Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply
By thy conception; children thou shalt bring
In sorrow forth, and to thy husband’s will
Thine shall submit; he over thee shall rule.’

On Adam last thus judgement he pronounced:
‘Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife,
And eaten of the tree^o concerning which
I charged thee, saying, *Thou shalt not eat thereof*,
Cursed is the ground for thy sake; thou in sorrow
Shalt eat thereof all the days of thy life;
Thorns also and thistles it shall bring thee forth
Unbid; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;
In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread,
Till thou return unto the ground; for thou
Out of the ground wast taken: know thy birth,
For dust thou art, and shalt to dust return.’

So judged he Man, both Judge and Saviour sent,
And the instant stroke of death, denounced that day,
Removed far off, then, pitying how they stood
Before him naked to the air, that now
Must suffer change, disdained not to begin
Thenceforth the form of servant to assume,^o
As when he washed his servants’ feet, so now,^o
As father of his family, he clad

183 **Mary, second Eve** as at v, 387 185 **Prince of the Air** “the prince of the power of the air” (Eph. ii, 2) 186-87 “And, having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it” (Col. ii, 15). 188 Based on Ps. lxxviii, 18 190 Romans, xvi, 20 (where margin has “tread”) 199 **eaten of the tree** cf. 122 214 cf. Philippians, ii, 7 215 John, xiii, 5

Their nakedness with skins of beasts, or slain
Or, as the snake, with youthful coat repaid;
And thought not much to clothe his enemies.
Nor he their outward only with the skins
Of beasts,^o but inward nakedness, much more
Opprobrious, with his robe of righteousness^o
Arraying, covered from his Father’s sight.
To him with swift ascent he up returned,
Into his blissful bosom reassumed
In glory as of old; to him, appeased,
All, though all-knowing, what had passed with Man
Recounted, mixing intercession sweet.

Meanwhile, ere thus was sinned and judged on Earth,
Within the gates of Hell sat Sin and Death,
In counterview^o within the gates, that now
Stood open wide, belching outrageous flame
Far into Chaos, since the Fiend passed through,
Sin opening, who thus now to Death began:

‘O Son, why sit we here, each other viewing
Idly, while Satan, our great author,^o thrives
In other worlds, and happier seat provides
For us, his offspring dear? It cannot be
But that success attends him; if mishap,
Ere this he had returned, with fury driven
By his avengers, since no place like this
Can fit this punishment or their revenge.
Methinks I feel new strength within me rise,
Wings growing, and dominion given^o me large
Beyond this Deep—whatever draws me on,
Or sympathy or some connatural force,
Powerful at greatest distance to unite
With secret amity things of like kind

By secretest conveyance. Thou, my shade°
Inseparable, must with me along,
For Death from Sin no power can separate.
But, lest the difficulty of passing back

220-21 **with . . . skins/ Of beasts** cf. 217 222 **robe of righteousness** Isaiah, lxi, 10
231 **In counterview** opposite each other; cf. 235 236 **great author** cf. v, 188 244
dominion given cf. iv, 430-31; viii, 545-46; vi, 887 249 **shade** shadow, with a pun
on the classical meaning of shade

Stay his return perhaps over this gulf
Impassable, impervious, let us try
Adventurous work, yet to thy power and mine
Not unagreeable, to found° a path
Over this main° from Hell to that new World
Where Satan now prevails—a monument
Of merit high to all the infernal host,
Easing their passage hence, for intercourse
Or transmigration, as their lot shall lead.
Nor can I miss the way, so strongly drawn
By this new-felt attraction and instinct.’

Whom thus the meagre Shadow answered soon:
‘Go whither fate and inclination strong
Leads thee; I shall not lag behind nor err
The way, thou leading: such a scent I draw
Of carnage, prey innumerable, and taste
The savour of death from all things there that live.
Nor shall I to the work thou enterprisest
Be wanting, but afford thee equal aid.’

So saying, with delight he snuffed the smell
Of mortal change on Earth. As when a flock
Of ravenous fowl, though many a league° remote,
Against the day of battle to a field
Where armies lie encamped come flying, lured
With scent of living carcasses designed
For death the following day in bloody fight:
So scented the grim Feature° and upturned
His nostril wide into the murky air,
Sagacious° of his quarry from so far.
Then both, from out Hell-gates, into the waste
Wide anarchy of Chaos, damp and dark,
Flew diverse, and, with power (their power was great)
Hovering upon the waters, what they met°
Solid or slimy, as in raging sea
Tossed up and down, together crowded drove,
From each side shoaling, towards the mouth of Hell;

256 **found** construct 257 **this main** chaos 274 **many a league** cf. ii, 929; iv, 164 279
Feature shape 281 **Sagacious** keenscented 285 ff. Note, as Tillyard points out, the
ways in which this passage is a “parody” of “God’s creative act in the seventh
book.”

As when two polar winds,° blowing adverse
Upon the Cronian Sea,° together drive
Mountains of ice, that stop the imagined way°
Beyond Petsora° eastward to the rich
Cathaian° coast. The aggregated soil
Death with his mace petrific, cold and dry,
As with a trident smote, and fixed as firm
As Delos,° floating once; the rest his look
Bound with Gorgonian° rigour not to move,
And with asphaltic slime; broad as the gate,
Deep to the roots of Hell the gathered beach
They fastened, and the mole° immense wrought on

Over the foaming Deep high-arched, a bridge
 Of length prodigious, joining to the wall
 Immovable of this now fenceless World,
 Forfeit to Death—from hence a passage broad,
 Smooth, easy, inoffensive,^o down to Hell.
 So, if great things to small may be compared,
 Xerxes,^o the liberty of Greece to yoke,
 From Susa, his Memnonian palace high,
 Came to the sea, and, over Hellespont
 Bridging his way, Europe with Asia joined,
 And scourged with many a stroke the indignant waves.
 Now had they brought the work by wondrous art
 Pontifical^o—a ridge of pendent rock
 Over the vexed abyss, following the track
 Of Satan, to the selfsame place where he

289 **polar winds** cf. v, 269 290 **Cronian Sea** Arctic Ocean 291 **the imagined way**
 the northeast passage, the undiscoverable goal of so many Renaissance explorers
 292 **Petsora** The author's *History of Muscovia* identifies as a "river . . . holding his
 course through Siberia, how far, the Russians thereabouts know not, runneth into the
 sea at 72 mouths, full of ice." 293 **Cathaian** Mongolian, distinguished from Chinese
 as more northerly 296 **Delos** cf. v, 265 297 **Gorgonian** petrifying; cf. ii, 611 300
mole causeway 305 **inoffensive** without obstacle 307 **Xerxes** On succeeding to the
 throne of Persia (486 B.C.), he thought it necessary to carry on the tradition of his
 father, Darius, in preparing a punitive expedition against Greece. Herodotus tells
 how the emperor ordered the waves to be scourged when they broke his bridge of
 ships. 313 **Pontifical** a pun that (1) means literally bridge-building and (2) hits at
 pontiffs

First lighted^o from his wing and landed safe
 From out of Chaos to the outside bare
 Of this round World. With pins of adamant
 And chains they made all fast, too fast they made
 And durable; and now in little space
 The confines met of empyrean Heaven
 And of this World, and on the left hand Hell,
 With long reach interposed; three several ways
 In sight to each of these three places led.
 And now their way to Earth they had descried,
 To Paradise first tending, when, behold
 Satan, in likeness of an Angel bright,^o
 Betwixt the Centaur and the Scorpion steering
 His zenith, while the Sun in Aries rose;^o
 Disguised he came, but those his children dear
 Their parent soon discerned, though in disguise.
 He, after Eve seduced, unminded slunk
 Into the wood fast by, and, changing shape
 To observe the sequel, saw his guileful act
 By Eve, though all unweeting, seconded
 Upon her husband—saw their shame that sought
 Vain covertures; but, when he saw descend
 The Son of God to judge them, terrified
 He fled, not hoping to escape, but shun
 The present, fearing, guilty, what his wrath
 Might suddenly inflict; that past, returned
 By night, and, listening where the hapless pair
 Sat in their sad discourse and various plaint,
 Thence gathered his own doom, which understood
 Not instant, but of future time. With joy
 And tidings fraught to Hell he now returned,
 And at the brink of Chaos, near the foot
 Of this new wondrous pontifice,^o unhopd
 Met who to meet him came, his offspring dear.

Great joy was at their meeting, and at sight
Of that stupendious bridge his joy increased.
Long he admiring stood, till Sin, his fair

315—16 **where he/ First lighted** cf. iv, 570 327 **Angel bright** cf. iii, 645 328-29 In
order not to be detected, Satan goes by constellations that are far from the region
where the sun (with Uriel) is rising. 348 **pontifice** bridge

Enchanting daughter,° thus the silence broke:
‘O Parent, these are thy magnific deeds,
Thy trophies, which thou view’st as not thine own;
Thou art their author and prime architect.
For I no sooner in my heart divined—
My heart, which by a secret harmony
Still moves with thine, joined in connection sweet—
That thou on Earth hadst prospered, which thy looks
Now also evidence, but straight I felt,
Though distant from thee worlds between, yet felt
That I must after thee with this thy son;
Such fatal consequence unites us three,
Hell could no longer hold us in her bounds,
Nor this unvoyageable gulf obscure
Detain from following thy illustrious track.
Thou hast achieved our liberty, confined
Within Hell-gates till now, thou us empowered
To fortify thus far, and overlay
With this portentous bridge the dark abyss.°
Thine now is all this World; thy virtue° hath won
What thy hands builded not; thy wisdom gained,
With odds, what war hath lost, and fully avenged
Our foil in Heaven. Here thou shalt monarch reign,°
There didst not; there let him still victor sway,
As battle hath adjudged, from this new World°
Retiring, by his own doom° alienated,
And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,
His quadrature° from thy orbicular World,
Or try thee now more dangerous to his throne.’

Whom thus the Prince of Darkness answered glad:
‘Fair daughter, and thou, son and grandchild both,
High proof ye now have given to be the race
Of Satan (for I glory in the name,
Antagonist of Heaven’s Almighty King),
Amplly have merited of me, of all

352-53 **his fair/ Enchanting daughter** cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 934 371 **the dark
abyss** cf. ii, 1027 372 **virtue** courage 375 **monarch reign** cf. v, 832; also i, 637-38
377 **new World** a fixed reference, as at 257; i, 650; ii. 403, 867; iv, 34, 113, 391; vii,
209 378 **doom** sentence 381 **quadrature** Heaven is foursquare like the Heavenly
Jerusalem (of Rev. xxi, 16)

The Infernal Empire, that so near Heaven’s door
Triumphal with triumphal act have met,
Mine with this glorious work, and made one realm
Hell and this World—one realm, one continent
Of easy thoroughfare. Therefore, while I
Descend through Darkness, on your road with ease,
To my associate Powers, them to acquaint
With these successes and with them rejoice,
You two this way, among those numerous orbs,
All yours, right down to Paradise descend;
There dwell, and reign in bliss; thence on the Earth
Dominion exercise and in the air,
Chiefly on Man, sole lord of all declared;

Him first make sure your thrall, and lastly kill.
 My substitutes I send ye, and create
 Plenipotent on Earth, of matchless might
 Issuing from me. On your joint vigour now
 My hold of this new kingdom all depends,
 Through Sin to Death exposed by my exploit.
 If your joint power prevail,° the affairs of Hell
 No detriment need fear; go, and be strong.’

So saying,° he dismissed them; they with speed
 Their course through thickest constellations held,
 Spreading their bane; the blasted stars looked wan,
 And planets, planet-struck, real eclipse
 Then suffered. The other way Satan went down
 The causey° to Hell-gate; on either side°
 Disparted Chaos overbuilt exclaimed,
 And with rebounding surge the bars assailed
 That scorned his indignation. Through the gate,
 Wide open° and unguarded, Satan passed,
 And all about found desolate, for those
 Appointed to sit there had left their charge,
 Flown to the upper World; the rest were all
 Far to the inland retired about the walls

408 prevail 1674 adds s. 410 So saying one of the many formulae of speech that
 mark this epic. as others: this participial expression has occurred a dozen times
 before, varied by “Thus saying” four times. In the last two books there is “To whom
 thus Michael” eight times, “To whom Michael thus” once, etc. 415 causey causeway
on either side cf. ii, 649; vi. 221. 844 418-19 **gate/ Wide open** cf. 231-32; ii, 884

Of Pandemonium, city and proud seat
 Of Lucifer, so by allusion called
 Of that bright star to Satan paragoned.° °
 There kept their watch the legions, while the Grand
 In council sat, solicitous what chance
 Might intercept their Emperor sent; so he
 Departing gave command,° and they observed.°
 As when the Tartar° from his Russian foe,
 By Astracan,° over the snowy plains,
 Retires, or Bactrian° Sophi, from the horns°
 Of Turkish crescent, leaves all waste beyond
 The realm of Aladule° in his retreat
 To Tauris or Casbeen:° so these, the late
 Heaven-banished host, left desert utmost Hell
 Many a dark league, reduced in careful watch
 Round their metropolis, and now expecting
 Each hour their great Adventurer from the search
 Of foreign worlds; he through the midst unmarked,
 In show plebeian Angel militant
 Of lowest order, passed, and, from the door
 Of that Plutonian hall, invisible
 Ascended his high throne, which, under state
 Of richest texture spread, at the upper end
 Was placed in regal lustre. Down a while
 He sat, and round about him saw, unseen.
 At last, as from a cloud, his fulgent head
 And shape star-bright appeared, or brighter, clad
 With what permissive glory since his fall
 Was left him, or false glitter. All amazed
 At that so sudden blaze,° the Stygian throng
 Bent their aspect, and whom they wished beheld,

426 **paragoned** compared 429-30 so **he/ Departing gave command** *namque ita*
 discedens praeceperat (Aen. IX, 40) 430 observed obeyed 431 **the Tartar** cf. iii, 432

432 the mouth of the Volga 433 **Bactrian** Persian (the Sophi was the ruler of Persia)
horns the two wings of an army, as well as the ends of the “crescent” or half-moon
of the Turkish ensign 435 **The reahn of Aladule** Armenia (named after King
Aladeules, renowned for his stout resistance to the Turks) 436 **Tauris or Casbeen**
Persian cities 453 The use of sudden blaze at “Lycidas” (74) may be viewed as
sufficiently implying a craving for glory to warrant its being mentioned in the note.

Their mighty Chief^o returned; loud was the acclaim:^o
Forth rushed^o in haste the great consulting Peers,
Raised from their dark Divan,^o and with like joy
Congratulant approached him, who with hand
Silence, and with these words attention, won:^o

‘Thrones, Dominations, Princedoms, Virtues,
Powers—

For in possession such, not only of right,
I call ye, and declare ye now, returned,
Successful beyond hope, to lead ye forth
Triumphant out of this infernal pit^o
Abominable, accursed, the house of woe,^o
And dungeon of our tyrant: Now possess,
As lords,^o a spacious World, to our native Heaven^o
Little inferior, by my adventure hard
With peril great^o achieved. Long were to tell^o
What I have done, what suffered, with what pain
Voyaged the unreal,^o vast, unbounded Deep
Of horrible confusion, over which
By Sin and Death a broad way now is paved,
To expedite your glorious march; but I
Toiled out my uncouth^o passage, forced to ride
The untractable Abyss, plunged in the womb
Of unoriginal^o Night and Chaos^o wild,
That, jealous of their secrets, fiercely opposed
My journey strange, with clamorous uproar
Protesting Fate supreme;^o thence how I found
The new-created World,^o which fame in Heaven^o
Long had foretold, a fabric wonderful,

455 **Their mighty Chief** cf. i, 566 **loud** . . . **acclaim** cf. ii, 520; iii, 397; vi, 23 456
Forth rushed cf. vi, 749 457 **Divan** continuing the Turkish comparison—council of
state; cf. Sultan, i, 348. 458-59 The silent effectiveness of this leader is like Julius
Caesar’s in Lucan’s *Pharsalia*, I, 297. 464 **this infernal pit** cf. i, 657; ii, 850; iv, 965
465 **the house of woe** cf. vi, 877 466-67 **possess/ As lords** cf. viii, 339-40 467 **our**
native Heaven cf. v, 863 469 **peril great** cf. ix, 922 **Long were to tell** cf. i, 507 (a
Spenserian formula) 471 **unreal** i.e., uncreated, formless 475 **uncouth** cf. ii, 407
477 **unoriginal** without origin or beginning (since nothing existed before Night,
“eldest of things,” ii, 962) **Night and Chaos** paired at ii, 894-95 478-80 a lie 481
The new-created World cf. iii, 89; iv, 937; vii, 554 **fame in Heaven** cf. i, 651; ii, 346

Of absolute perfection; therein Man
Placed in a paradise, by our exile
Made happy. Him by fraud I have seduced
From his Creator, and, the more to increase
Your wonder, with an apple; He, thereat
Offended, worth your laughter, hath given up
Both his beloved Man and all his World
To Sin and Death a prey, and so to us,
Without our hazard, labour or alarm,
To range in, and to dwell, and over Man
To rule, as over all he should have ruled.
True is, me also he hath judged; or rather
Me not, but the brute Serpent, in whose shape
Man I deceived. That which to me belongs

Is enmity, which he will put between
 Me and Mankind: I am to bruise his heel;
 His seed—when is not set—shall bruise my head:
 A world who would not purchase with a bruise,
 Or much more grievous pain? Ye have the account
 Of my performance; what remains, ye Gods,
 But up and enter now into full bliss.’

So having said, a while he stood, expecting
 Their universal shout and high applause
 To fill his ear, when, contrary, he hears,
 On all sides, from innumerable tongues
 A dismal universal hiss, the sound
 Of public scorn; he wondered, but not long
 Had leisure, wondering at himself now more;
 His visage drawn he felt to sharp and spare,
 His arms clung to his ribs, his legs entwining
 Each other, till, supplanted,^o down he fell,
 A monstrous serpent on his belly prone,
 Reluctant,^o but in vain; a greater power
 Now ruled him, punished in the shape he sinned,
 According to his doom: he would have spoke,
 But hiss for hiss returned with forked tongue
 To forked tongue; for now were all transformed
 Alike, to serpents all, as accessories
 To his bold riot: dreadful was the din^o

513 **supplanted** (Latin) tripped up by the heels 515 **Reluctant** struggling 521-28
 Note the hissing sibilance.

Of hissing through the hall, thick-swarmed now
 With complicated^o monsters, head and tail,
 Scorpion, and Asp, and Amphisbaena^o dire,
 Cerastes horned, Hydrus, and Ellops drear,^o
 And Dipsas^o (not so thick swarmed^o once the soil^o
 Bedropped with blood of Gorgon, or the isle
 Ophiusa^o), but still greatest he the midst,
 Now Dragon^o grown, larger than whom the Sun
 Engendered in the Pythian vale on slime,
 Huge Python; and his power no less he seemed
 Above the rest still to retain; they all
 Him followed, issuing forth^o to the open field,
 Where all yet left of that revolted rout,
 Heaven-fallen, in station stood or just array,
 Sublime with expectation when to see
 In triumph issuing forth their glorious Chief;
 They saw, but other sight instead—a crowd
 Of ugly serpents; horror on them fell,
 And horrid sympathy, for what they saw
 They felt themselves now changing; down their arms,
 Down fell both spear and shield; down they as fast,
 And the dire hiss renewed, and the dire form
 Caught by contagion, like in punishment
 As in their crime. Thus was the applause they meant
 Turned to exploding^o hiss, triumph to shame^o
 Cast on themselves from their own mouths. There stood
 A grove hard by, sprung up with this their change,
 His will who reigns above,^o to aggravate

523 **complicated** twisted 524 **Amphisbaena** (Greek, “going both ways”) a fabulous
 serpent able to go forwards or backwards because it had a head at each end 525
 Serpents all (Hydrus, as its name indicates, being a water snake) 526 **Dipsas** (Greek)
 called the “Thirst Snake” from the deadly consequences of its bite **thick swarmed**
 cf. i, 767 **the soil** of Libya in Africa 528 **Ophiusa** (“Snake-abounding”) Greek name

for one of the islands near Minorca 529 “And the great dragon was cast out . . .” (Rev. xii, 9) 533 **issuing forth** another formula. as at 537; ii, 786; viii. 233; ix, 447 546 **exploding** this meant to drive off the stage by hissing **triumph to shame** “therefore will I change their glory into shame” (Hos., iv, 7) 549 **who reigns above** cf. ii, 814

Their penance, laden with fair^o fruit, like that
Which grew in Paradise, the bait of Eve
Used by the Tempter. On that prospect strange
Their earnest eyes they fixed, imagining
For one forbidden tree^o a multitude
Now risen, to work them further woe or shame,
Yet, parched with scalding thirst and hunger fierce,
Though to delude them sent, could not abstain,
But on they rolled in heaps, and, up the trees
Climbing, sat thicker than the snaky locks
That curled Megaera.^o Greedily they plucked
The fruitage fair to sight, like that which grew
Near that bituminous lake^o where Sodom flamed;
This, more delusive, not the touch, but taste
Deceived; they, fondly thinking to allay
Their appetite with gust, instead of fruit
Chewed bitter ashes, which the offended taste
With spattering noise rejected; oft they assayed,^o
Hunger and thirst^o constraining; drugged^o as oft,
With hatefulest disrelish writhed their jaws
With soot and cinders filled; so oft they fell
Into the same illusion, not as Man
Whom they triumphed once lapsed. Thus were they plagued,
And, worn with famine, long and ceaseless hiss,
Till their lost shape, permitted, they resumed—
Yearly enjoined, some say, to undergo
This annual humbling certain numbered days,
To dash their pride, and joy for Man seduced.
However, some tradition they dispersed
Among the heathen of their purchase got,
And fabled how the Serpent, whom they called

550 **fair** was omitted in 1674. Actually it is applied to the forbidden fruit nine times, including 561; first as “this fair fruit.” ix, 731, 763, 972. 554 **forbidden tree** cf. i, 2
560 **Megaera** One of the Furies, avenging goddesses; assigned “snaky locks” by Claudian 562 **that bituminous lake** the Dead Sea. Keightley reports the following tradition of the apples of Sodom: “This fruit, when ripe, if it be pressed, explodes, leaving in the hand only the shreds of the rind and a few fibres.” 567-70 onomatopoeia 568 **Hunger and thirst** called “Powerful persuaders,” ix, 586-87 **drugged** nauseated as by pills

Ophion,^o with Eurynome^o (the wide-
Encroaching Eve perhaps), had first the rule
Of high Olympus, thence by Saturn driven
And Ops,^o ere yet Dictaeon^o Jove was born.

Meanwhile in Paradise the hellish pair
Too soon arrived—Sin, there in power before
Once actual, now in body, and to dwell
Habitual habitant; behind her Death,
Close following pace for pace, not mounted yet
On his pale horse;^o to whom Sin thus began:
‘Second of Satan sprung, all-conquering Death,
What think’st thou of our empire now, though earned,
With travail difficult, not better far
Than still at Hell’s dark threshold to have sat watch,
Unnamed, undreaded, and thyself half-starved?’

Whom thus the Sin-born Monster answered soon:
 ‘To me, who with eternal famine pine,
 Alike is Hell, or Paradise, or Heaven,
 There best where most with ravin I may meet:
 Which here, though plenteous, all too little seems
 To stuff this maw, this vast unhidebound^o corpse.’

To whom the incestuous Mother thus replied:
 ‘Thou, therefore, on these herbs and fruits and flowers,^o
 Feed first; on each beast next, and fish, and fowl—
 No homely morsels; and whatever thing
 The scythe of Time mows down devour unspared,
 Till I, in Man residing through the race,
 His thoughts, his looks, words, actions, all infect,
 And season him thy last and sweetest prey.’

This said, they both betook them several ways,
 Both to destroy, or unimmortal make
 All kinds, and for destruction to mature
 Sooner or later; which the Almighty seeing,
 From his transcendent seat the Saints among,

581 **Ophion** “The Serpent,” Titan, who was forced to yield Olympus to Cronus (Saturn). The Renaissance followed Origen in making an identification with the serpent of Eden **Eurynome** Her Greek name is immediately translated. 584 Ops fertility goddess made wife of Saturn by Romans **Dictaeon** referring to Mount Dicte in Crete, the island where Jupiter was brought up. 590 **his pale horse** cf. Revelation, vi, 8 601 **unhidebound** loose-skinned (famished) 603 **fruits and flowers** cf. viii, 44

To those bright Orders uttered thus his voice:
 ‘See with what heat these dogs of Hell advance
 To waste and havoc yonder World, which I
 So fair and good created, and had still
 Kept in that state, had not the folly of Man
 Let in these wasteful furies, who impute
 Folly to me (so doth the Prince of Hell
 And his adherents), that with so much ease
 I suffer them to enter and possess^o
 A place so heavenly, and, conniving, seem
 To gratify my scornful enemies,
 That laugh, as if, transported with some fit
 Of passion I to them had quitted all,
 At random yielded up to their misrule,
 And know not that I called and drew them thither,
 My Hell-hounds, to lick up the draff and filth
 Which Man’s polluting sin with taint hath shed
 On what was pure; till, crammed and gorged, nigh burst
 With sucked and glutted offal, at one sling^o
 Of thy victorious arm, well-pleasing Son,
 Both Sin and Death, and yawning Grave, at last
 Through Chaos hurled, obstruct the mouth of Hell
 Forever, and seal up his ravenous jaws.
 Then Heaven and Earth, renewed, shall be made pure^o
 To sanctity that shall receive no stain:
 Till then the curse pronounced on both precedes.’

He ended, and the Heavenly audience loud^o
 Sung Halleluiah, as the sound of seas,^o
 Through multitude that sung: ‘Just are thy ways,^o
 Righteous are thy decrees on all thy works;
 Who can extenuate^o thee? Next, to the Son,
 Destined restorer of Mankind, by whom
 New Heaven and Earth shall to the ages rise,

623 **enter and possess** legal terminology 633 **at one sling** “and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as out of the middle of a sling” (1 Sam. xxv, 29) 638 i.e., the world will be burned at the Last Judgment 641 **loud** functions both as adjective and as adverb 642-43 “And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, . . . saying, Alleluia!” (Rev. xix, 6) 643 ‘**Just are thy ways**’ ‘Just and true are thy ways” (Rev. xv, 3) 645 **extenuate** disparage, reduce

Or down from Heaven descend.’ Such was their song,^o
 While the Creator, calling forth by name
 His mighty Angels, gave them several charge,
 As sorted best with present things. The Sun
 Had first his precept so to move. so shine,
 As might affect the Earth with cold and heat
 Scarce tolerable, and from the north to call
 Decrepit winter, from the south to bring
 Solstitial summer’s heat. To the blank^o Moon
 Her office they prescribed: to the other five
 Their planetary motions and aspects,
 In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,^o
 Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
 In synod unbenign; and taught the fixed^o
 Their influence malignant when to shower—
 Which of them, rising with the Sun or falling,^o
 Should prove tempestuous. To the winds they set
 Their corners, when with bluster to confound
 Sea, air, and shore; the thunder when to roll
 With terror through the dark aerial hall.
 Some say he bid his Angels turn askance
 The poles of Earth twice ten degrees and more
 From the Sun’s axle; they with labour pushed
 Oblique the centric Globe:^o some say the Sun
 Was bid turn reins from the equinoctial road
 Like distant breadth to Taurus^o with the seven
 Atlantic Sisters^o and the Spartan twins
 Up to the Tropic Crab, thence down amain
 By Leo, and the Virgin, and the Scales,^o
 As deep as Capricorn, to bring in change
 Of seasons to each clime: else had the spring
 Perpetual smiled on Earth with vernal flowers,
 Equal in days and nights, except to those
 Beyond the polar circles; to them day
 Had unbenighted shone, while the low Sun,
 To recompense his distance, in their sight

647–48 cf. Revelation, xxi, 1. 2 656 **blank** pale 659 alternating prosperous and malignant positions 661 **the fixed** stars 663 **rising . . . or falling** said of mists, v, 191 671 the **centric Globe** the Earth 673 **Taurus** cf. i, 769 674 **Atlantic Sisters** the Pleiades 676 **the Scales** Libra (cf. iv, 997)

Had rounded still the horizon, and not known
 Or east or west, which had forbid the snow
 From cold Estotiland,^o and south as far
 Beneath Magellan. At that tasted fruit,
 The Sun, as from Thyestean banquet,^o turned
 His course intended; else how had the world
 Inhabited, though sinless, more than now
 Avoided pinching cold and scorching heat?
 These changes in the heavens, though slow, produced
 Like change on sea and land—sidereal blast,^o
 Vapour, and mist, and exhalation hot,
 Corrupt and pestilent. Now from the north
 Of Norumbega,^o and the Samoed^o shore,

Bursting their brazen dungeon, armed with ice,
 And snow and hail, and stormy gust and flaw,^o
 Boreas and Caecias and Argestes loud
 And Thrascias^o rend the woods, and seas upturn;
 With adverse blast upturns them from the south
 Notus, and Afer^o black with thundrous clouds
 From Serralliona;^o thwart of these, as fierce
 Forth rush the Levant and the Ponent^o winds,
 Eurus and Zephyr,^o with their lateral noise,
 Sirocco and Libecchio.^o Thus began
 Outrage from lifeless things; but Discord first,
 Daughter of Sin, among the irrational,
 Death introduced through fierce antipathy:
 Beast now with beast 'gan war, and fowl with fowl,
 And fish with fish; to graze the herb all leaving
 Devoured each other, nor stood much in awe

686 **Estotiland** an island off Labrador, according to Mercator maps. 688 **Thyestean banquet** Atreus slew the children of his brother Thyestes and served them to him at a banquet—a transgression from which the sun averted his face and reversed his course for one day. 693 **sidereal** (in the original *sideran*) **blast** from the stars 696 **Norumbega** roughly, the New England area **Samoed** “Northeast of Russia lieth Samoedia by the river Ob” (Milton’s History of Muscovia) 698 **flaw** a blast of wind 699-700 northern winds 702 southern winds 703 **Serralliona** Sierra Leone, West African cape with a sixmonth-long rainy season 704 the **Levant and the Ponent** the East (sun-rising) and the West 705 as above 706 **Sirocco and Libecchio** Italian names for the southeast and southwest winds

Of Man, but fled him, or with countenance grim
 Glared on him passing. These were from without
 The growing miseries, which Adam saw
 Already in part, though hid in gloomiest shade,
 To sorrow abandoned, but worse felt within,
 And, in a troubled sea of passion tossed,^o
 Thus to disburden sought with sad complaint:
 ‘O miserable of happy! is this the end
 Of this new glorious World, and me so late
 The glory of that glory? who now, become
 Accursed of blessed, hide me from the face
 Of God, whom to behold was then my height
 Of happiness; yet well, if here would end
 The misery, I deserved it, and would bear
 My own deserving; but this will not serve:
 All that I eat or drink, or shall beget,
 Is propagated curse. O voice, once heard
 Delightfully, “*Increase and multiply*,”^{oo}
 Now death to hear! for what can I increase
 Or multiply but curses on my head?
 Who of all ages to succeed, but, feeling
 The evil on him brought by me, will curse
 My head? “Ill fare our ancestor impure;
 For this we may thank Adam,” but his thanks
 Shall be the execration. So, besides
 Mine own that bide upon me, all from me
 Shall with a fierce reflux on me redound—
 On me, as on their natural centre, light
 Heavy, though in their place. O fleeting joys
 Of Paradise, dear bought with lasting woes!
 Did I request thee, Maker, from my clay
 To mould me Man? did I solicit thee
 From darkness to promote me, or here place
 In this delicious garden? As my will
 Concluded not to my being, it were but right

718 “But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt” (Is. lvii, 20). “in . . . seal Tossed” was literal at 286–87, and “a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes” is a personal allusion at the end of the preface to Book II of *The Reason of Church Government*. 730 Genesis, i, 28

And equal^o to reduce me to my dust,
 Desirous to resign and render back
 All I received, unable to perform
 Thy terms too hard, by which I was to hold
 The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
 Sufficient penalty, why hast thou added
 The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
 Thy justice seems, yet, to say truth, too late
 I thus contest; then should have been refused
 Those terms, whatever, when they were proposed.
 Thou didst accept them: wilt thou enjoy the good,
 Then cavil the conditions? and, though God
 Made thee without thy leave, what if thy son
 Prove disobedient, and, reprov'd, retort,
 “Wherefore didst thou beget me? I sought it not.”^o
 Wouldst thou admit for his contempt of thee
 That proud excuse? yet him not thy election,^o
 But natural necessity, begot.
 God made thee of choice his own, and of his own^o
 To serve him; thy reward was of his grace;
 Thy punishment, then, justly is at his will.
 Be it^o so, for I submit; his doom is fair
 That dust I am, and shall to dust return.^{o o}
 O welcome hour whenever! why delays
 His hand to execute what his decree
 Fixed on this day? why do I overlive?
 Why am I mocked with death, and lengthened out
 To deathless pain? how gladly would I meet
 Mortality, my sentence, and be earth
 Insensible! how glad would lay me down
 As in my mother’s lap!^o there I should rest
 And sleep secure; his dreadful voice no more
 Would thunder in my ears; no fear of worse
 To me and to my offspring would torment me
 With cruel expectation. Yet one doubt^o
 Pursues me still—lest all I cannot die;^o

748 **equal** equitable 762 cf. Isaiah, xlv, 10 764 **election** choice 766 cf. 759–60 769
 Be it elide 770 cf. 208 778 As **in my mother’s lap** cf. xi, 536 and “But on their
 mother Earth’s dear lap did lie” (F. Q., V, vii, 9) 782 ff. The mortalist or soul-sleeper
 heresy—Milton’s own belief and reasoning in his *Christian Doctrine* (I, xiii) 783 **all I**
cannot die non omnis moriar (Horace, *Carm.* III, 30, 63)

Lest that pure breath of life, the Spirit of Man
 Which God inspired, cannot together perish
 With this corporeal clod; then, in the grave,
 Or in some other dismal place, who knows
 But I shall die a living death?^o O thought
 Horrid, if true! yet why? It was but breath
 Of life that sinned:^o what dies but what had life
 And sin? the body properly hath neither.
 All of me, then, shall die: let this appease^o
 The doubt, since human reach no further knows.
 For, though the Lord of all be infinite,
 Is his wrath also? be it,^o Man is not so,
 But mortal doomed. How can he exercise
 Wrath without end^o on Man, whom death must end?
 Can he make deathless death? that were to make

Strange contradictions; which to God himself
 Impossible is held, as argument
 Of weakness, not of power. Will he draw out,
 For anger's sake, finite to infinite
 In punished Man, to satisfy his rigour,
 Satisfied never? that were to extend
 His sentence beyond dust and Nature's law,
 By which all causes else, according still
 To the reception of their matter, act,
 Not to the extent of their own sphere. But say
 That death be not one stroke, as I supposed,
 Bereaving sense, but endless misery^o
 From this day onward, which I feel begun
 Both in me and without^o me, and so last
 To perpetuity, ay me, that fear
 Comes thundering back with dreadful revolution
 On my defenceless head; both Death and I
 Am found eternal, and incorporate both,
 Nor I on my part single; in me all
 Posterity stands cursed. Fair patrimony
 That I must leave ye, sons; oh, were I able
 To waste it all myself, and leave ye none!

788 **a living death** cf. Samson Agonistes, 100 789–90 cf. 784 792 Cf. 783 and iii,
 246 795 **be it** elide, as at 769 797 **without end** used eight times previously 810
endless misery cf. i, 142 812 **without** outside

So disinherited, how would ye bless
 Me, now your curse! Ah, why should all Mankind,
 For one man's fault thus guiltless be condemned,
 If guiltless? But from me what can proceed
 But all corrupt, both mind and will depraved
 Not to do only, but to will the same
 With me? How can they, then, acquitted stand
 In sight of God? Him, after all disputes,
 Forced I absolve: all my evasions vain
 And reasonings, though through mazes, lead me still
 But to my own conviction: first and last^o
 On me, me only, as the source and spring
 Of all corruption, all the blame lights due.
 So might the wrath. Fond wish! couldst thou support
 That burden, heavier than the Earth to bear—
 Than all the world much heavier, though divided
 With that bad Woman? Thus, what thou desir'st
 And what thou fear'st alike destroys all hope
 Of refuge, and concludes thee miserable
 Beyond all past example and future,
 To Satan only like, both crime and doom.
 O Conscience, into what abyss of fears
 And horrors hast thou driven me; out of which
 I find no way, from deep to deeper plunged!

Thus Adam to himself lamented loud
 Through the still night, not now, as ere Man fell,
 Wholesome and cool and mild, but with black air
 Accompanied, with damps and dreadful gloom;
 Which to his evil conscience represented
 All things with double terror. On the ground
 Outstretched he lay, on the cold ground, and oft
 Cursed his creation, Death as oft accused
 Of tardy execution, since denounced
 The day of his offence. 'Why comes not Death,'^o
 Said he, 'with one thrice acceptable stroke
 To end me? Shall Truth fail to keep her word,

Justice divine not hasten to be just?
But Death comes not at call;° Justice divine

831 **first and last** cf. ii, 324; iii, 134 854 **Why comes not Death** an echo of
Sophocles' Phitocetes, 793 ff. 858 cf. xi, 491-93

Mends not her slowest pace for prayers or cries.
O woods, O fountains, hillocks, dales, and bowers,
With other echo late I taught your shades
To answer, and resound far other song.'°
Whom, thus afflicted, when sad Eve° beheld,
Desolate where she sat, approaching nigh,
Soft words to his fierce passion she assayed,
But her, with stern regard,° he thus repelled:
'Out of my sight, thou serpent; that name best
Befits thee with him leagued, thyself as false
And hateful: nothing wants, but that thy shape
Like his, and colour serpentine, may show
Thy inward fraud, to warn all creatures from thee
Henceforth, lest that too heavenly form,° pretended°
To hellish falsehood, snare them. But for thee
I had persisted happy, had not thy pride
And wandering vanity, when least was safe,
Rejected my forewarning and disdained
Not to be trusted—longing to be seen,
Though by the Devil himself; him overweening
To overreach; but, with the Serpent meeting,
Fooled and beguiled; by him thou, I by thee,
To trust thee from my side, imagined wise,
Constant, mature, proof against all assaults,
And understood not all was but a show,
Rather than solid virtue, all but a rib
Crooked by nature—bent, as now appears,
More to the part sinister°—from me drawn;
Well if thrown out, as supernumerary
To my just number found.° Oh, why did God,°
Creator wise,° that peopled highest Heaven°

861–62 verbal echoes here of Virgil's Eclogues, I, 4–5, which also influenced
"Lycidas" (68) 863 **sad Eve** as at 159 866 **with stern regard** cf. iv, 877 872
heavenly form cf. ix, 457 **pretended** Latin, stretched out (like a screen) 886
sinister in Latin, left 887–88 Tradition had it that Adam had had an extra, thirteenth
rib, from which Eve was formed. 888 ff. Euripides' Hippolytus was likeminded (616
ff.): "Great Zeus, why didst thou, to man's sorrow, put woman, evil counterfeit, to
dwell where shines the sun? If thou wert minded that the human race should
multiply, it was not from women they should have drawn their stock. . . ." 888–89
God,/ **Creator wise** cf. ix, 938 **highest Heaven** cf. i, 517; iii, 657; viii, 178

With Spirits masculine, create at last
This novelty on Earth, this fair defect
Of Nature, and not fill the World at once
With men as Angels, without feminine;
Or find some other way to generate
Mankind? this mischief had not then befallen,
And more that shall befall—innumerable
Disturbances on Earth through female snares,
And strait conjunction with this sex: for either
He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake,
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain,
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
By a far worse, or, if she love, withheld
By parents, or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound°

To a fell adversary, his hate or shame,
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound.'

He added not, and from her turned, but Eve,
Not so repulsed, with tears that ceased not flowing
And tresses all disordered, at his feet
Fell humble, and, embracing them, besought
His peace, and thus proceeded in her plaint:

'Forsake me not thus, Adam, witness Heaven
What love sincere and reverence in my heart
I bear thee, and unweeting have offended,
Unhappily deceived; thy suppliant
I beg, and clasp thy knees; bereave me not
Whereon I live, thy gentle looks, thy aid,
Thy counsel in this uttermost distress,
My only strength and stay. Forlorn of thee,
Whither shall I betake me, where subsist?
While yet we live, scarce one short hour perhaps,
Between us two let there be peace; both joining,
As joined in injuries, one enmity

905 **already linked and wedlock-bound** It is uncertain whether these participles refer to the man or to the woman, "his happiest choice." Milton after his first wife left him considered marrying a Miss Davis; 910-13 describe what that first wife did to win his forgiveness.

Against a foe by doom express assigned us,
That cruel Serpent. On me exercise not
Thy hatred for this misery befallen,
On me already lost, me than thyself
More miserable; both have sinned, but thou
Against God only, I against God and thee,
And to the place of judgement will return,
There with my cries importune Heaven, that all
The sentence, from thy head removed, may light
On me, sole cause to thee of all this woe,
Me, me only, just object of His ire.'

She ended, weeping, and her lowly plight,
Immoveable^o till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commiseration: soon his heart relented
Towards her, his life so late, and sole delight,^o
Now at his feet submissive in distress—
Creature so fair^o his reconcilement seeking,
His counsel whom she had displeased, his aid;
As one disarmed, his anger all he lost,
And thus with peaceful words upraised her soon:

'Unwary, and too desirous, as before
So now, of what thou know'st not, who desir'st
The punishment all on thyself; alas!
Bear thine own first, ill able to sustain
His full wrath whose thou feel'st as yet least part,
And my displeasure bear'st so ill. If prayers
Could alter high decrees,^o I to that place^o
Would speed before thee and be louder heard,
That on my head all might be visited,
Thy frailty and infirmer sex forgiven,
To me committed and by me exposed.
But rise; let us no more contend, nor blame
Each other, blamed enough elsewhere, but strive
In offices of love how we may lighten
Each other's burden in our share of woe;
Since this day's death denounced,^o if aught I see,

938 **Immoveable** best taken as modifying Eve rather than Adam 941 sole delight cf. i, 160 943 **Creature so fair** cf. iv, 468 953 **high decrees** cf. iii, 126; v, 717 **that place** cf. 932 962 death denounced cf. 49, 210, 852-53; ix, 695

Will prove no sudden, but a slow-paced evil,
 A long day's dying, to augment our pain,
 And to our seed (O hapless seed!) derived.'
 To whom thus Eve, recovering heart, replied:
 'Adam, by sad experiment I know
 How little weight my words with thee can find,
 Found so erroneous, thence by just event
 Found so unfortunate; nevertheless,
 Restored by thee, vile as I am, to place
 Of new acceptance, hopeful to regain
 Thy love, the sole contentment of my heart,
 Living or dying from thee I will not hide
 What thoughts in my unquiet breast are risen,
 Tending to some relief of our extremes,
 Or end, though sharp and sad, yet tolerable,
 As in our evils,^o and of easier choice.
 If care of our descent^o perplex us most,
 Which must be born to certain woe, devoured
 By Death at last, and miserable it is
 To be to others cause of misery,
 Our own begotten, and of our loins to bring
 Into this cursed world a woeful race,
 That, after wretched life, must be at last
 Food for so foul a monster, in thy power
 It lies, yet ere conception, to prevent
 The race unblest, to being yet unbegot.
 Childless thou art, childless remain: so Death
 Shall be deceived his glut, and with us two
 Be forced to satisfy his ravenous maw.
 But, if thou judge it hard and difficult,
 Conversing, looking, loving, to abstain
 From love's due rites, nuptial embraces sweet,
 And with desire to languish without hope
 Before the present object languishing
 With like desire, which would be misery
 And torment less than none of what we dread,
 Then, both ourselves and seed at once to free
 From what we fear for both, let us make short;
 Let us seek Death, or, he not found, supply

978 **As in our evils** considering our plight 979 **descent** descendants

With our own hands his office on ourselves.
 Why stand we longer shivering under fears
 That show no end but death, and have the power,
 Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
 Destruction with destruction to destroy?'
 She ended here, or vehement despair
 Broke off the rest; so much of death her thoughts
 Had entertained as dyed her cheeks with pale.
 But Adam, with such counsel nothing swayed,
 To better hopes his more attentive mind
 Labouring had raised, and thus to Eve replied:
 'Eve, thy contempt of life and pleasure seems
 To argue in thee something more sublime
 And excellent than what thy mind contemns,
 But self-destruction therefore sought refutes
 That excellence thought in thee, and implies
 Not thy contempt, but anguish and regret

For loss of life and pleasure overloved.
 Or, if thou covet death, as utmost end
 Of misery, so thinking to evade
 The penalty pronounced, doubt not but God
 Hath wiselier armed his vengeful ire^o than so
 To be forestalled: much more I fear lest death
 So snatched will not exempt us from the pain
 We are by doom to pay; rather such acts
 Of contumacy will provoke the Highest
 To make death in us live: Then let us seek
 Some safer resolution, which methinks
 I have in view, calling to mind with heed
 Part of our sentence, that thy seed shall bruise
 The Serpent's head—piteous amends, unless
 Be meant, whom I conjecture, our grand foe,^o
 Satan, who in the Serpent hath contrived
 Against us this deceit: to crush his head
 Would be revenge indeed, which will be lost
 By death brought on ourselves, or childless days
 Resolved as thou proposest; so our foe
 Shall 'scape his punishment ordained, and we
 Instead shall double ours upon our heads.

1023 **his vengeful ire** cf. i, 148 1033 **our grand foe** cf. i, 122; vi, 149

No more be mentioned, then, of violence
 Against ourselves, and wilful barrenness,
 That cuts us off from hope, and savours only
 Rancour and pride, impatience and despite,
 Reluctance^o against God and his just yoke
 Laid on our necks. Remember with what mild
 And gracious temper he both heard and judged,^o
 Without wrath or reviling. We expected
 Immediate dissolution, which we thought
 Was meant by death that day; when, lo! to thee
 Pains only in child-bearing were foretold,
 And bringing forth, soon recompensed with joy,
 Fruit of thy womb. On me the curse aslope
 Glanced on the ground: with labour I must earn
 My bread—what harm? Idleness had been worse;^o
 My labour will sustain me; and, lest cold
 Or heat should injure us, his timely care
 Hath, unbesought, provided, and his hands
 Clothed us unworthy, pitying while he judged.
 How much more, if we pray him, will his ear
 Be open, and his heart to pity incline,^o
 And teach us further by what means to shun
 The inclement seasons, rain, ice, hail, and snow,
 Which now the sky, with various face, begins
 To show us in this mountain, while the winds
 Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
 Of these fair spreading trees, which bids us seek
 Some better shroud, some better warmth to cherish
 Our limbs benumbed, ere this diurnal star
 Leave cold the night, how we his gathered beams
 Reflected may with matter sere foment,
 Or by collision of two bodies grind
 The air attrite^o to fire, as late the clouds,
 Justling, or pushed with winds, rude in their shock,
 Tine^o the slant lightning, whose thwart flame,
 driven down,
 Kindles the gummy bark of fir or pine,

1045 **Reluctance** struggling (cf. 515) 1046-47 **mild . . . judged** cf. “the mild judge,”
 96. 1055 **Idleness had been worse** The strenuous Puritan emerges. 1061 to **pity**
incline cf. iii, 402, 405 1073 **attrite** worn by friction 1075 **Tine** kindle

And sends a comfortable heat from far,
 Which might supply the sun; such fire to use,
 And what may else be remedy or cure
 To evils which our own misdeeds have wrought,
 He will instruct us praying, and of grace
 Beseeching him, so as we need not fear
 To pass commodiously this life, sustained
 By him with many comforts till we end
 In dust, our final rest and native home.
 What better can we do than, to the place
 Repairing where he judged us, prostrate fall
 Before him reverent, and there confess
 Humbly our faults, and pardon beg, with tears
 Watering the ground,^o and with our sighs the air
 Frequenting,^o sent from hearts contrite, in sign
 Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek?
 Undoubtedly he will relent, and turn
 From his displeasure, in whose look serene,
 When angry most he seemed and most severe,
 What else but favour, grace, and mercy shone?’

So spake our Father penitent, nor Eve
 Felt less remorse: they, forthwith to the place
 Repairing where he judged them, prostrate fell^o
 Before him reverent, and both confessed
 Humbly their faults, and pardon begged, with tears
 Watering the ground, and with their sighs the air
 Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
 Of sorrow unfeigned and humiliation meek.

1089-90 **tears/ Watering the ground** spargitur et tellus lacrimis (Aen. XI, 191)
 1091 **Frequenting** filling 1099—1104 A daring repetition of 1087—92

BOOK XI

THE ARGUMENT

The Son of God presents to his Father the prayers of our first parents now repenting, and intercedes for them. God accepts them, but declares that they must no longer abide in Paradise; sends Michael with a band of Cherubim to dispossess them, but first to reveal to Adam future things; Michael's coming down. Adam shows to Eve certain ominous signs: he discerns Michael's approach; goes out to meet him; the Angel denounces their departure. Eve's lamentation. Adam pleads, but submits; the Angel leads him up to a high hill; sets before him in *vision* what shall happen till the Flood.

THUS they, in lowliest plight, repentant stood^o
Praying, for from the mercy-seat above
Prevenient grace descending had removed
The stony from their hearts and made new flesh^o
Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breathed
Unutterable which the Spirit of prayer
Inspired, and winged for Heaven with speedier flight
Than loudest oratory; yet their port
Not of mean suitors, nor important less
Seemed their petition than when the ancient pair
In fables old, less ancient yet than these,
Deucalion and chaste Pyrrha, to restore
The race of mankind drowned, before the shrine
Of Themis stood devout.^o To Heaven their prayers
Flew up, nor missed the way, by envious winds

1 **stood** in apparent contradiction to x, 1099. Some take as meaning "continued," but cf. the punning 8-9 and note 14, where this interpretation is scarcely possible. Ovid has Pyrrha and Deucalion act as at 1099 ff.; the Puritan in Christian Doctrine allows for standing to pray. 4 Based on Ezekiel, xi, 19 10-14 After a deluge from Zeus like the biblical one, Deucalion and Pyrrha received the advice from the oracle of Themis, goddess of justice, to cast stones behind them, which turned into men and women, a new race called the Stone People.

Blown vagabond or frustrate:^o in they passed
Dimensionless^o through heavenly doors, then, clad
With incense, where the golden altar fumed
By their great Intercessor, came in sight
Before the Father's throne. Then the glad Son
Presenting, thus to intercede began:

'See, Father, what firstfruits on Earth are sprung
From thy implanted grace in Man—these sighs
And prayers, which in this golden censer, mixed^o
With incense, I, thy priest, before thee bring;
Fruits of more pleasing savour, from thy seed
Sown with contrition in his heart, than those
Which, his own hand manuring,^o all the trees
Of Paradise could have produced, ere fallen
From innocence. Now, therefore, bend thine ear
To supplication; hear his sighs, though mute;
Unskilful with what words to pray, let me
Interpret for him, me his advocate
And propitiation;^o all his works on me,
Good or not good, ingraft; my merit those
Shall perfect, and for these my death shall pay.
Accept me, and in me from these receive
The smell of peace toward Mankind; let him live,
Before thee reconciled, at least his days

Numbered, though sad, till death, his doom (which I
To mitigate^o thus plead, not to reverse),
To better life shall yield him, where with me
All my redeemed may dwell in joy and bliss,
Made one with me, as I with thee am one.’

To whom the Father, without cloud, serene:
‘All thy request for Man, accepted Son,
Obtain; all thy request was my decree,
But longer in that Paradise to dwell
The law I gave to Nature him forbids;
Those pure immortal elements, that know
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
Eject him, tainted now, and purge him off,
As a distemper gross, to air as gross

15-16 Contrast the Paradise of Fools, iii, 485-89. 17 **Dimensionless** incorporeal 24
cf. Revelation, viii, 3 28 **manuring** cultivating 34 **propitiation** a word from 1 John,
ii, 2 40-41 **doom** . . . **mitigate** cf. x, 76

And mortal food as may dispose him best
For dissolution wrought by sin, that first
Distempered all things, and of incorrupt
Corrupted. I at first with two fair gifts
Created him endowed—with Happiness
And Immortality; that fondly lost,
This other served but to eternize woe,
Till I provided Death; so Death becomes
His final remedy, and after life
Tried in sharp tribulation, and refined
By faith and faithful works, to second life,^o
Waked in the renovation of the just,
Resigns him up with Heaven and Earth renewed.^o
But let us call to synod all the Blest
Through Heaven’s wide bounds; from them I will
not hide
My judgements, how with Mankind I proceed,
As how with peccant Angels late they saw,
And in their state, though firm, stood more confirmed.’
He ended, and the Son gave signal high
To the bright Minister that watched; he blew
His trumpet, heard in Oreb^o since perhaps
When God descended, and perhaps once more
To sound at general doom. The angelic blast
Filled all the regions: from their blissful bowers
Of amaranthine^o shade, fountain or spring,
By the waters of life, where’er they sat
In fellowships of joy, the Sons of Light^o
Hasted, resorting to the summons high,
And took their seats, till from his throne supreme^o
The Almighty thus pronounced his sovran will:
‘O Sons, like one of us Man is become
To know both good and evil, since his taste
Of that defended^o fruit; but let him boast
His knowledge of good lost and evil got;^o
Happier had it sufficed him to have known
Good by itself and evil not at all.
He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite—

64 cf. xii, 427 66 **Heaven and Earth renewed** cf. x, 638 74 **Oreb** cf. i, 7 78
amaranthine cf. iii, 352 ff. 80 cf. “Lycidas” 177-79. 82 throne **supreme** cf. x, 28 86
defended in the French sense of forbidden 87 cf. vii, 543; ix, 697, 723: also iv, 222;
viii, 324

My motions in him; longer than they move,
 His heart I know how variable and vain,
 Self-left. Lest, therefore, his now bolder hand
 Reach also of the Tree of Life, and eat,
 And live forever, dream at least to live
 Forever, to remove him I decree,
 And send him from the Garden forth, to till
 The ground whence he was taken, fitter soil.
 'Michael, this my behest have thou in charge:
 Take to thee from among the Cherubim
 Thy choice of flaming warriors, lest the Fiend,
 Or in behalf of° Man or to invade
 Vacant possession, some new trouble raise;
 Haste thee, and from the Paradise of God
 Without remorse drive out the sinful pair,
 From hallowed ground the unholy, and denounce
 To them, and to their progeny, from thence
 Perpetual banishment. Yet, lest they faint
 At the sad sentence rigorously urged
 (For I behold them softened, and with tears
 Bewailing their excess°), all terror hide.
 If patiently thy bidding they obey,
 Dismiss them not disconsolate; reveal
 To Adam what shall come in future days,
 As I shall thee enlighten; intermix .
 My covenant in the Woman's seed renewed.
 So send them forth, though sorrowing, yet in peace;
 And on the east side of the Garden place,
 Where entrance up from Eden easiest climbs,
 Cherubic watch,° and of a sword the flame
 Wide-waving, all approach far off to fright,
 And guard all passage to the Tree of Life,
 Lest Paradise a receptacle prove
 To Spirits foul, and all my trees their prey,
 With whose stolen fruit Man once more to delude.'
 He ceased, and the Archangelic Power prepared
 For swift descent; with him the cohort bright
 Of watchful Cherubim. Four faces each°

102 in **behalf of** with regard to 111 excess transgression 120 **Cherubic watch** cf. ix,
 68, and below, 128 128 **Four faces each** cf. vi, 753

Had, like a double Janus;° all their shape
 Spangled with eyes more numerous than those
 Of Argus,° and more wakeful than to drowse,
 Charmed with Arcadian pipe, the pastoral reed
 Of Hermes, or his opiate rod. Meanwhile,
 To resalute the World with sacred light,°
 Leucothea° waked, and with fresh dew° embalmed
 The Earth, when Adam and first matron Eve
 Had ended now their orisons, and found,
 Strength added from above, new hope to spring
 Out of despair, joy, but with fear yet linked;
 Which thus to Eve his welcome words renewed:
 'Eve, easily may faith admit that all
 The good which we enjoy from Heaven descends;
 But that from us aught should ascend to Heaven
 So prevalent as to concern the mind
 Of God° high-blest, or to incline his will,
 Hard to belief may seem; yet this will prayer,
 Or one short sigh of human breath, upborne
 Even to the seat of God. For, since I sought
 By prayer the offended Deity to appease,

Kneeled and before him humbled all my heart,
 Methought I saw him placable and mild,
 Bending his ear; persuasion in me grew
 That I was heard with favour; peace returned
 Home to my breast, and to my memory
 His promise that thy seed shall bruise our Foe;
 Which, then not minded in dismay, yet now
 Assures me that the bitterness of death^o
 Is past, and we shall live. Whence hail to thee,

129 **a double Janus** Roman divinity presiding over gates and the beginning of everything, such as the year (thus January) and seasons. Usually represented with two heads looking east and west, he sometimes had four, signifying power in the four quarters of the earth. 131 **Argus** who, in words from *Of Reformation*, had “a hundred eyes of jealousy” with which to watch Juno’s rival Io, but Hermes succeeded in putting them all to sleep 134 **sacred light** cf. ix, 192 135 **Leucothea** “Shining goddess,” on Ovid’s authority the Roman Matuta, goddess of the dawn **fresh dews** cf. i, 771 144-145 **the mind/ Of God** cf. v, 117 157 **the bitterness of death** phrase from 1 Samuel xv, 32

Eve rightly called, Mother of all Mankind,^o
 Mother of all things living,^o since by thee
 Man is to live, and all things live for Man.’
 To whom thus Eve, with sad demeanour meek:
 ‘Ill-worthy I such title should belong
 To me transgressor, who, for thee ordained
 A help, became thy snare; to me reproach
 Rather belongs, distrust and all dispraise:
 But infinite in pardon was my Judge,
 That I, who first brought death on all, am graced
 The source of life; next favourable thou,
 Who highly thus to entitle me vouchsaf’st,
 Far other name deserving. But the field
 To labour calls us, now with sweat imposed,
 Though after sleepless night; for see, the Morn,
 All unconcerned with our unrest, begins
 Her rosy progress smiling; let us forth,
 I never from thy side henceforth to stray,
 Where’er our day’s work lies, though now enjoined
 Laborious, till day droop; while here we dwell,
 What can be toilsome in these pleasant walks?
 Here let us live, though in fallen state, content.’

So spake, so wished, much-humbled Eve; but Fate
 Subscribed not; Nature first gave signs, impressed
 On bird, beast, air—air suddenly eclipsed,^o
 After short blush of morn; nigh in her sight^o
 The bird of Jove,^o stooped from his aery tour,^o
 Two birds of gayest plume before him drove;
 Down from a hill the beast that reigns in woods,
 First hunter then, pursued a gentle brace,
 Goodliest of all the forest, hart and hind;
 Direct to the eastern gate was bent their flight.
 Adam observed, and, with his eye the chase
 Pursuing, not unmoved, to Eve thus spake:
 ‘O Eve, some further change awaits us nigh,

159 **Mother of all Mankind** cf. i, 36; v, 388 160 “And Adam called his wife’s name Eve; because she was the mother of all living” (Gen. iii, 20). 183 **eclipsed** a bad sign; cf. “Lycidas,” 101. 184-86 modeled on an omen in the twelfth book of the *Aeneid* 185 **The bird of Jove** the eagle **tour** perhaps to be spelled tower and meaning lofty flight, but the ambiguity is to the good

Which Heaven by these mute signs in Nature shows,
 Forerunners of his purpose, or to warn

Us, haply too secure of our discharge
 From penalty because from death released
 Some days: how long, and what till then our life,
 Who knows, or more than this, that we are dust,
 And thither must return, and be no more.
 Why else this double object in our sight
 Of flight pursued in the air and o'er the ground
 One way the selfsame hour? why in the east
 Darkness ere day's mid-course, and morning-light
 More orient in yon western cloud, that draws
 O'er the blue firmament a radiant white,
 And slow descends, with something heavenly fraught?'

He erred not, for by this the heavenly bands
 Down from a sky of jasper lighted now
 In Paradise, and on a hill made halt,
 A glorious apparition, had not doubt
 And carnal fear that day dimmed Adam's eye.
 Not that more glorious when the Angels met^o
 Jacob in Mahanaim, where he saw
 The field pavilioned with his guardians bright,^o
 Nor that which on the flaming mount^o appeared^o
 In Dothan, covered with a camp of fire,
 Against the Syrian king, who, to surprise
 One man,^o assassinlike, had levied war,
 War unproclaimed. The princely Hierarch
 In their bright stand there left his Powers to seize
 Possession of the Garden; he alone,
 To find where Adam sheltered, took his way,
 Not unperceived of Adam, who to Eve,
 While the great visitant approached, thus spake:
 'Eve, now expect great tidings, which perhaps
 Of us will soon determine, or impose
 New laws^o to be observed, for I descry,
 From yonder blazing cloud that veils the hill,
 One of the heavenly host,^o and, by his gait,^o

213-15 Genesis, xxxvii, 1-2 215 **guardians bright** cf. iii, 512 216-20 2 Kings, vi,
 13-17 216 **flaming mount** cf. v, 598 219 **One man** Elisha 228 **New laws** cf. v, 679,
 680 230 the heavenly host cf. ii, 824 by his gait cf. iv, 870

None of the meanest—some great Potentate,^o
 Or of the Thrones above, such majesty
 Invests him coming, yet not terrible,
 That I should fear, nor sociably mild,
 As Raphael, that I should much confide,
 But solemn and sublime; whom not to offend,
 With reverence I must meet, and thou retire.'

He ended; and the Archangel soon drew nigh,
 Not in his shape celestial, but as man
 Clad to meet man; over his lucid^o arms
 A military vest of purple flowed,
 Livelier than Meliboean,^o or the grain
 Of Sarra,^o worn by kings and heroes old^o
 In time of truce; Iris^o had dipped the woof;
 His starry helm unbuckled showed him prime
 In manhood where youth ended; by his side,
 As in a glistening zodiac, hung the sword,
 Satan's dire dread, and in his hand the spear.
 Adam bowed low; he, kingly, from his state^o
 Inclined not, but his coming thus declared:

'Adam, Heaven's high behest no preface needs;
 Sufficient that thy prayers are heard, and Death,
 Then due by sentence when thou didst transgress,

Defeated of his seizure many days,
 Given thee of grace, wherein thou may'st repent,
 And one bad act with many deeds well done
 May'st cover: well may then thy Lord, appeased,
 Redeem thee quite from Death's rapacious claim;
 But longer in this Paradise to dwell
 Permits not—to remove thee I am come,
 And send thee from the garden forth, to till
 The ground whence thou wast taken, fitter soil.'°

He added not; for Adam, at the news
 Heart-struck, with chilling gripe of sorrow stood,
 That all his senses bound; Eve, who unseen
 Yet all had heard, with audible lament

231 **great Potentate** cf. v, 706 240 **lucid** shining 242 **Meliboean** a rich purple dye
 ("grain") from the maritime Thessalian town of Meliboea (cf. Aen. V, 251) 243
Sarra Tyre, Phoenician seaport famous for its dyes **heroes old** cf. i, 552 244 **Iris** the
 rainbow goddess 249 **state** stateliness 259-62 largely repeats 48, 96-98

Discovered soon the place of her retire:
 'O unexpected stroke, worse than of Death!
 Must I thus leave thee, Paradise? thus leave
 Thee, native soil, these happy walks and shades,
 Fit haunt of Gods? where I had hope to spend,
 Quiet, though sad, the respite of that day
 That must be mortal to us both. O flowers,
 That never will in other climate grow,
 My early visitation, and my last
 At even, which I bred up with tender hand
 From the first opening bud and gave ye names,
 Who now shall rear ye to the Sun, or rank
 Your tribes, and water from the ambrosial fount?
 Thee, lastly, nuptial bower,° by me adorned
 With what to sight or smell was sweet, from thee
 How shall I part, and whither wander down
 Into a lower world, to this obscure
 And wild? how shall we breathe in other air
 Less pure, accustomed to immortal fruits?'

Whom thus the Angel interrupted mild:
 'Lament not, Eve, but patiently resign
 What justly thou hast lost, nor set thy heart,
 Thus overfond, on that which is not thine.
 Thy going is not lonely; with thee goes
 Thy husband; him to follow thou art bound;
 Where he abides, think there thy native soil.'°

Adam, by this from the cold sudden damp°
 Recovering, and his scattered spirits returned,
 To Michael thus his humble words addressed:

'Celestial, whether among the Thrones, or named
 Of them the highest—for such of shape may seem
 Prince above princes—gently hast thou told
 Thy message, which might else in telling wound,
 And in performing end us;° what besides
 Of sorrow, and dejection, and despair,
 Our frailty can sustain, thy tidings bring:
 Departure from this happy place,° our sweet

280 **nuptial bower** cf. viii, 510 292 **native soil** cf. 270 293 **damp** depression of
 spirits; cf. 544 298-300 Compare the Messenger's delicacy towards Manoa, *Samson*
Agonistes, 1565-68. 303 **this happy place** cf. iv, 562; v, 364

Recess,° and only consolation left
 Familiar to our eyes; all places else
 Inhospitable appear, and desolate,

Nor knowing us, nor known; and if by prayer
 Incessant I could hope to change the will
 Of him who all things can, I would not cease
 To weary him with my assiduous cries,
 But prayer against his absolute decree^o
 No more avails than breath against the wind,
 Blown stifling back on him that breathes it forth:
 Therefore to his great bidding I submit.
 This most afflicts me, that, departing hence,
 As from his face I shall be hid,^o deprived
 His blessed countenance; here I could frequent,
 With worship, place by place where he vouchsafed
 Presence Divine,^o and to my sons relate,
 "On this mount he appeared; under this tree
 Stood visible; among these pines his voice
 I heard; here with him at this fountain talked."
 So many grateful altars I would rear
 Of grassy turf,^o and pile up every stone
 Of lustre from the brook, in memory
 Or monument to ages, and thereon
 Offer sweet-smelling gums, and fruits, and flowers.
 In yonder nether world where shall I seek
 His bright appearances or footstep trace?
 For, though I fled him angry, yet, recalled
 To life prolonged and promised race, I now
 Gladly behold though but his utmost skirts
 Of glory,^o and far off his steps adore.⁷

To whom thus Michael, with regard benign:
 'Adam, thou know'st Heaven his, and all the Earth,
 Not this rock only; his omnipresence fills
 Land, sea, and air, and every kind that lives,
 Fomented by his virtual power and warmed.
 All the Earth he gave thee to possess and rule,^o

303–04 **sweet/ Recess** cf. ix, 456 311 **absolute decree** cf. iii, 115 316 Closer than
 Samson Agonistes, 1749, are Cain's words, "and from thy face shall I be hid" (Gen.
 iv, 14). 319 **Presence Divine** cf. viii, 314 324 **Of grassy turf** cf. v, 391 332–33
skirts/ Of glory, cf. iii, 388 339 **gave . . . to . . . rule** cf. i, 736

No despicable gift; surmise not, then,
 His presence to these narrow bounds confined
 Of Paradise or Eden: this had been
 Perhaps thy capital seat, from whence had spread
 All generations, and had hither come,
 From all the ends of ^o the Earth, to celebrate
 And reverence thee their great progenitor.^o
 But this pre-eminence thou hast lost, brought down
 To dwell on even ground now with thy sons;
 Yet doubt not but in valley and in plain
 God is as here, and will be found alike
 Present, and of his presence many a sign
 Still following thee, still compassing thee round
 With goodness and paternal love, his face
 Express, and of his steps the track divine.
 Which that thou may'st believe, and be confirmed
 Ere thou from hence depart, know I am sent
 To show thee what shall come in future days^o
 To thee and to thy offspring; good with bad
 Expect to hear, supernal grace^o contending
 With sinfulness of men, thereby to learn
 True patience, and to temper joy with fear
 And pious sorrow, equally inured
 By moderation either state to bear,

Prosperous or adverse: so shalt thou lead
 Safest thy life, and best prepared endure
 Thy mortal passage when it comes. Ascend
 This hill; let Eve (for I have drenched her eyes)
 Here sleep below while thou to foresight wak'st,
 As once thou slept'st while she to life was formed.'

To whom thus Adam gratefully replied:
 'Ascend; I follow thee, safe guide, the path
 Thou lead'st me, and to the hand of Heaven submit,
 However chastening, to the evil turn
 My obvious^o breast, arming to overcome
 By suffering, and earn rest from labour won,
 If so I may attain.' So both ascend

345 **From all the ends of** cf. v, 586 346 **great progenitor** cf. v, 544 357 **what shall**
come in future days cf. 114; also vi, 502 359 **supernal grace** cf. vii, 573 374
obvious literally, lying in the way

In the visions of God:^o It was a hill,
 Of Paradise the highest, from whose top
 The hemisphere of Earth in clearest ken
 Stretched out to the^o amplest reach of prospect lay.
 Not higher that hill, nor wider looking round,
 Whereon for different cause the Tempter set
 Our second Adam,^o in the wilderness,
 To show him all Earth's kingdoms and their glory.
 His eye might there command wherever stood
 City of old or modern fame, the seat
 Of mightiest empire, from the destined walls
 Of Cambalu,^o seat of Cathaian Can,
 And Samarcand^o by Oxus, Temir's throne,
 To Paquin^o of Sinaean^o kings, and thence
 To Agra^o and Lahor^o of Great Mogul,
 Down to the golden Chersonese,^o or where
 The Persian in Ecbatan^o sat, or since
 In Hispahan,^o or where the Russian Tsar
 In Moscow, or the Sultan in Bizance,^o
 Turkestan-born; nor could his eye not ken
 The empire of Negus^o to his utmost port
 Ercoco,^o and the less maritime kings,
 Mombaza,^o and Quiloa, and Melind,

377 "Now I am come to make thee understand what shall befall thy people in the
 latter days: for yet the vision is for many days" (Dan. x, 14). 380 the omitted in 1667
 383 **Our second Adam** Jesus (the subject of Paradise Regained) 388 Cambalu built
 by Kubla Khan 389 **Samarcand** oldest city of central Asia, the capital of
 Tamberlane (Temir) 390 **Paquin** Peking **Sinaean** Chinese 391 **Agra** in northwestern
 India, formerly a great Mogul capital; site of the famous midseventeenth-century
 construction the Taj Mahal **Lahor** another Mogul center, in western Pakistan 392
the golden Chersonese "Aurea Chersonesus . . . the same which is now called
 Sumatra" (Purchas); or possibly the Malay Peninsula 393 **Ecbatan** capital of ancient
 Media, residence of Cyrus 394 **Hispahan** Ispahan became the capital of Persia in the
 sixteenth century. 395 **Bizance** Constantinople 397 **Negus** the title of the king of
 Abyssinia (Ethiopia) 398 **Ercoco** Abyssinian port on the west shore of the Red Sea
 399 **Mombaza** Kenyan port, an early center of Arab trade, held by Portuguese in
 Milton's time. "This kingdom lyeth between the borders of Quiloa and Melind
 (Purchas).

And Sofala^o (thought Ophir^o), to the realm
 Of Congo, and Angola farthest south;^o
 Or thence from Niger flood^o to Atlas mount,^o
 The kingdoms of Almansor,^o Fez^o and Sus,^o
 Marocco, and Algiers, and Tremisen;^o
 On Europe thence, and where Rome was to sway

The world; in spirit perhaps he also saw
 Rich Mexico, the seat of Motezume,
 And Cusco° in Peru, the richer seat
 Of Atabalipa,° and yet unspoiled
 Guiana, whose great city Geryon's sons°
 Call El Dorado; but to nobler sights
 Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed,°
 Which that false fruit° that promised clearer sight
 Had bred, then purged with euphrasy° and rue°
 The visual nerve, for he had much to see,
 And from the well of life three drops instilled.°
 So deep-the power of these ingredients pierced,
 Even to the inmost seat of mental sight,
 That Adam, now enforced to close his eyes,
 Sunk down, and all his spirits became entranced;
 But him the gentle Angel by the hand
 Soon raised, and his attention thus recalled:
 'Adam, now ope thine eyes, and first behold

400 **Sofala** a rich seaport in Portuguese East Africa **Ophir** the region where King Solomon obtained gold 401 **Angola farthest south** (of the Congo) Portuguese West Africa 402 **Niger flood** the 2600-mile river of western Africa **Atlas mount** in northwest Africa 403 **Almansor** tenth-century Mohammedan rulers of Andalusia and North Africa, some of whose subject towns Milton names **Fez** in Morocco, one of the sacred places of Islam and trade source of the red hat, the fez **Sus** a province of Morocco 404 **Tremisen** modern Tlemcen, in Algeria; one of the five Barbary States and capital of the Moslem Berber dynasty 408 **Cusco** Inca capital 409 **Atabalipa** Atahualpa (d. 1533), last Inca king of Peru, overthrown and condemned to death by Pizarro 410 **Geryon's sons** Spaniards 412 **the film removed** Michael does the same in Tasso, and there were precedents in Homer and Virgil 413 **that false fruit** cf. ix, 1011 414 **euphrasy** the plant eye-bright (from Greek to cheer) rue an herb supposedly effective against snake bite 416 "For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light" (Ps. xxxvi. 9).

The effects which thy original crime hath wrought
 In some to spring from thee, who never touched
 The excepted tree, nor with the Snake conspired,
 Nor sinned thy sin, yet from that sin° derive
 Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds.'
 His eyes he opened, and beheld a field,° °
 Part arable and tilth,° whereon were sheaves
 New-reaped, the other part sheep-walks and folds;
 I' the midst an altar as the landmark stood,
 Rustic, of grassy sward; thither anon
 A sweaty reaper from his tillage brought
 Firstfruits, the green ear and the yellow sheaf,
 Unculled, as came to hand; a shepherd next,
 More meek, came with the firstlings of his flock,
 Choicest and best; then, sacrificing, laid
 The inwards° and their fat, with incense strewed,
 On the cleft wood, and all due rites performed.
 His offering soon propitious fire from Heaven
 Consumed with nimble glance and grateful steam:
 The other's not, for his was not sincere;°
 Whereat he inly raged, and, as they talked,
 Smote him into the midriff with a stone
 That beat out life; he fell, and, deadly pale,
 Groaned out his soul, with gushing blood effused.°
 Much at that sight was Adam in his heart
 Dismayed, and thus in haste to the Angel cried:
 'O Teacher, some great mischief hath befallen
 To that meek man, who well had sacrificed;
 Is piety thus and pure devotion paid?'

To whom Michael thus, he also moved, replied:
 ‘These two are brethren, Adam, and to come
 Out of thy loins; the unjust the just hath slain,
 For envy that his brother’s offering found
 From Heaven acceptance; but the bloody fact^o
 Will be avenged, and the other’s faith^o approved
 Lose no reward, though here thou see him die,

427 **from that sin** sin omitted in 1674 429 ff. the story of Cain and Abel 430 **tilth**
 land that is tilled 439 **The inwards** the entrails 443 Milton, whose function it is to
 justify God’s ways, supplies a reason for God’s discrimination that is missing in
 Genesis, iv, 4-5. 447 imitative of Aeneid, IX, 349 and X, 908 457 **fact** deed 458
faith cf. Hebrews, xi, 4

Rolling in dust and gore.’ To which our Sire:
 ‘Alas, both for the deed and for the cause!
 But have I now seen Death? Is this the way
 I must return to native dust? O sight
 Of terror, foul and ugly to behold,
 Horrid to think, how horrible to feel!’

To whom thus Michael: ‘Death thou hast seen
 In his first shape on Man; but many shapes
 Of Death, and many are the ways that lead
 To his grim cave, all dismal, yet to sense
 More terrible at the entrance than within.^o
 Some, as thou saw’st, by violent stroke shall die,
 By fire, flood, famine; by intemperance more
 In meats and drinks, which on the Earth shall bring
 Diseases dire, of which a monstrous crew
 Before thee shall appear, that thou may’st know
 What misery the inabstinence of Eve
 Shall bring on men.’ Immediately a place
 Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome, dark;
 A lazar-house^o it seemed, wherein were laid,
 Numbers of all diseased, all maladies
 Of ghastly spasm or racking torture, qualms
 Of heart-sick agony; all feverous kinds,
 Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
 Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
 Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,^o
 And moon-struck madness,^o pining atrophy,
 Marasmus,^o and wide-wasting pestilence,
 Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
 Dire was the tossing, deep the groans; Despair
 Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
 And over them triumphant Death his dart
 Shook, but delayed to strike, though oft invoked
 With vows, as their chief good and final hope.^{o o}
 Sight so deform what heart of rock could long
 Dry-eyed behold? Adam could not, but wept,

470 Bacon in “Of Death” quoted from Seneca to this effect, “Pompa mortis magis
 terret,” etc. 479 **A lazar-house** a pest house or hospital 485-87 added in the second
 edition 486 **moon-struck madness** lunacy 487 **Marasmus** consumption, the
 “wasting” sickness 493 **final hope** cf. ii, 142

Though not of woman born: compassion quelled
 His best of man, and gave him up to tears^o
 A space, till firmer thoughts restrained excess,
 And, scarce recovering words, his plaint renewed:
 ‘O miserable Mankind, to what fall
 Degraded, to what wretched state reserved!
 Better end here unborn. Why is life given
 To be thus wrested from us? rather why

Obtruded on us thus? who, if we knew
What we receive, would either not accept
Life offered, or soon beg to lay it down,
Glad to be so dismissed in peace. Can thus
The image of God in Man, created once
So goodly and erect, though faulty since.
To such unsightly sufferings be debased
Under inhuman pains? Why should not Man,
Retaining still divine similitude^o
In part, from such deformities be free,
And for his Maker's image sake exempt?

'Their Maker's image,' answered Michael, 'then
Forsook them, when themselves they vilified
To serve ungoverned appetite, and took
His image whom they served, a brutish vice,
Inductive mainly to the sin of Eve.
Therefore so abject is their punishment,
Disfiguring not God's likeness, but their own,
Or, if his likeness, by themselves defaced,
While they pervert pure Nature's healthful rules
To loathsome sickness, worthily, since they
God's image did not reverence in themselves.'

'I yield it just,' said Adam, 'and submit.
But is there yet no other way, besides
These painful passages, how we may come
To death, and mix with our connatural dust?'

'There is,' said Michael, 'if thou well observe
The rule of *Not too much*, by temperance taught^o
In what thou eat'st and drink'st, seeking from thence
Due nourishment, not gluttonous delight,
Till many years over thy head return;

496—97 echoes of *Macbeth* here, V, viii, 18, 30-31 512 **divine similitude** cf. 508
and iii, 384 531 classic advice

So may'st thou live, till, like ripe fruit, thou drop
Into thy mother's lap,^o or be with ease
Gathered, not harshly plucked, for death mature:^o
This is old age; but then thou must outlive
Thy youth, thy strength, thy beauty, which will change
To withered, weak, and grey; thy senses then
Obtuse, all taste of pleasure must forgo
To what thou hast; and, for the air of youth,
Hopeful and cheerful, in thy blood will reign
A melancholy damp of cold and dry,^o
To weigh thy spirits down, and last consume
The balm of life.' To whom our Ancestor:

'Henceforth I fly not death, nor would prolong
Life much, bent rather how I may be quit,
Fairest and easiest, of this cumbrous charge,
Which I must keep till my appointed day^o
Of rendering up, and patiently attend
My dissolution.'^o Michael replied:

'Nor love thy life nor hate, but what thou liv'st^o
Live well; how long or short permit to Heaven:
And now prepare thee for another sight.'

He looked, and saw a spacious plain, whereon
Were tents of various hue; by some were herds
Of cattle grazing: others whence the sound
Of instruments that made melodious chime
Was heard, of harp and organ, and who^o moved
Their stops and chords was seen: his volant^o touch,
Instinct through all proportions low and high,

Fled and pursued transverse the resonant fugue.
 In other part stood one who, at the forge
 Labouring, two massy clods of iron and brass
 Had melted (whether found where casual fire

536 **Into thy mother's lap** cf. x, 778 537 Milton has in mind a passage in Cicero's *De Senectute*, the title he translates in the next line 544 **cold and dry** cf. x, 294 550 cf. Job, xiv, 14 551-52 **and patiently attend/ My dissolution** added in second edition 553 Martial, X, 47 560 **who** Jubal. His half brother was Tubal-cain—564; see Genesis, iv, 20-22. 561 **volant** flying. James Whaler contends, "Milton's unsurpassable definition of fugue at PL XI, 561-563, is surely meant by him to apply to the rhythmic method of his epic style as well as to polyphonic music."

Had wasted woods, on mountain or in vale,
 Down to the veins of earth, thence gliding hot
 To some cave's mouth, or whether washed by stream
 From underground); the liquid ore he drained
 Into fit moulds prepared, from which he formed
 First his own tools, then what might else be wrought
 Fusil^o or graven in metal. After these,
 But on the hither side,^o a different sort^o
 From the high neighbouring hills,^o which was their seat,
 Down to the plain descended: by their guise
 Just men they seemed, and all their study bent
 To worship God aright, and know his works
 Not hid, nor those things last which might preserve
 Freedom and peace to men; they on the plain
 Long had not walked, when from the tents behold
 A bevy of fair women, richly gay^o
 In gems and wanton dress; to the harp they sung
 Soft amorous ditties,^o and in dance came on;
 The men, though grave, eyed them, and let their eyes
 Rove without rein, till, in the amorous net
 Fast caught, they liked, and each his liking chose;
 And now of love they treat, till the evening-star,
 Love's harbinger, appeared, then, all in heat,
 They light the nuptial torch, and bid invoke
 Hymen, then first to marriage rites^o invoked:
 With feast and music all the tents resound.
 Such happy interview, and fair event
 Of love and youth not lost, songs, garlands, flowers,
 And charming symphonies,^o attached the heart
 Of Adam, soon inclined to admit delight,
 The bent of Nature; which he thus expressed:
 'True opener of mine eyes, prime Angel blest,
 Much better seems this vision, and more hope
 Of peaceful days portends, than those two past:
 Those were of hate and death, or pain much worse;
 Here Nature seems fulfilled in all her ends.'

To whom thus Michael: 'Judge not what is best

573 **Fusil** formed by melting or casting, molten 574 **hither side** cf. iii, 722 **a different sort** the descendants of Seth 575 **neighbouring hills** cf. v, 547; vi, 663 581-82 Genesis, vi, 1-2 584 **amorous ditties** cf. i, 449 591 **marriage rites** cf. viii, 487 595 **charming symphonies** cf. iii, 368

By pleasure, though to Nature seeming meet,
 Created, as thou art, to nobler end,
 Holy and pure, conformity divine.
 Those tents thou saw'st so pleasant were the tents
 Of wickedness,^o wherein shall dwell his race
 Who slew his brother; studious they appear
 Of arts that polish life, inventors rare,
 Unmindful of their Maker, though his Spirit

Taught them; but they his gifts acknowledged none.
 Yet they a beauteous offspring shall beget,
 For that fair female troop thou saw'st, that seemed
 Of goddesses, so blithe, so smooth, so gay,
 Yet empty of all good wherein consists
 Woman's domestic honour and chief praise,
 Bred only and completed to the taste
 Of lustful appetite, to sing, to dance,
 To dress, and troll° the tongue, and roll the eye—
 To these that sober race of men, whose lives
 Religious titled them the Sons of God,
 Shall yield up all their virtue, all their fame,
 Ignobly, to the trains° and to the smiles
 Of these fair atheists, and now swim in joy
 (Erelong to swim at large°) and laugh; for which
 The world erelong a world of tears must weep.'

To whom thus Adam, of short joy bereft:
 'O pity and shame, that they who to live well
 Entered so fair should turn aside to tread
 Paths indirect, or in the midway faint!
 But still I see the tenor of Man's woe
 Holds on the same, from Woman to begin.'°
 'From Man's effeminate slackness it begins,'
 Said the Angel, 'who should better hold his place
 By wisdom, and superior gifts received.
 But now prepare thee for another scene.'

He looked, and saw wide territory spread
 Before him, towns, and rural works between,

607-608 **the tents/ Of wickedness** Psalms, lxxxiv, 10 620 **troll** wag 624 **trains**
 snares 626 **Erelong to swim at large A** similar punning reference to the Flood is at
 756—57. 632—33 play on the traditional derivation of *Woman*—Woe to man!

Cities of men with lofty gates and towers,
 Concourse in arms, fierce faces threatening war,
 Giants of mighty bone and bold emprise.
 Part wield their arms, part curb the foaming steed,°
 Single, or in array of battle ranged,
 Both horse and foot, nor idly mustering stood.
 One way a band select from forage drives°
 A herd of beeves, fair oxen and fair kine,
 From a fat meadow-ground, or fleecy flock,
 Ewes and their bleating lambs, over the plain,
 Their booty; scarce with life the shepherds fly,
 But call in aid, which makes° a bloody fray:
 With cruel tournament the squadrons join;
 Where cattle pastured late, now scattered lies
 With carcasses and arms the ensanguined field
 Deserted: others to a city strong
 Lay siege, encamped, by battery, scale,° and mine,
 Assaulting; others from the wall defend
 With dart and javelin, stones and sulphurous fire;
 On each hand slaughter and gigantic deeds.
 In other part the sceptred heralds call
 To council in the city-gates; anon
 Grey-headed men and grave, with warriors mixed,
 Assemble, and harangues are heard, but soon
 In factious opposition, till at last
 Of middle age one rising,° eminent
 In wise deport, spake much of right and wrong,
 Of justice, or religion, truth, and peace,
 And judgement from above: him old and young
 Exploded,° and had seized with violent hands,

Had not a cloud descending snatched him thence,
Unseen amid the throng. So violence
Proceeded, and oppression, and sword-law,
Through all the plain, and refuge none was found.
Adam was all in tears, and to his guide

643 **part curb the foaming steed** a mixture of ii, 531 and vi, 391 646 ff. Milton is following closely the description of Achilles' shield in *Iliad* XVIII. 651 **makes** 1667 has *tacks* 656 scale ladder 665 **Of middle age one rising** Enoch, who lived to age 365 (Gen. v, 23)—not half so long as such patriarchs as Methuselah and Lamech, who follow next in Genesis 669 **Exploded** hissed (as at x, 546)

Lamenting turned full sad: 'O, what are these?
Death's ministers, not men, who thus deal death
Inhumanly to men, and multiply
Ten thousandfold the sin of him who slew
His brother; for of whom such massacre
Make they but of their brethren, men of men?
But who was that just man, whom had not Heaven
Rescued, had in his righteousness been lost?'

To whom thus Michael: 'These are the product
Of those ill-mated marriages thou saw'st,
Where good with bad were matched, who of themselves
Abhor to join, and, by imprudence mixed,
Produce prodigious births of body or mind.
Such were these giants, men of high renown,
For in those days might only shall be admired,
And valour and heroic virtue called;
To overcome in battle, and subdue
Nations, and bring home spoils with infinite
Manslaughter, shall be held the highest pitch
Of human glory, and, for glory done,
Of triumph to be styled great conquerors,
Patrons of mankind, gods, and sons of gods—
Destroyers rightlier called, and plagues of men.
Thus fame shall be achieved, renown on earth,^o
And what most merits fame in silence hid.
But he, the seventh from thee, whom thou
beheld'st^o

The only righteous in a world perverse,
And therefore hated, therefore so beset
With foes, for daring single to be just
And utter odious truth that God would come
To judge them with his Saints—him the Most High,
Rapt in a balmy cloud, with winged steeds,^o
Did, as thou saw'st,^o receive, to walk with God
High in salvation and the climes of bliss,
Exempt from death, to show thee what^o reward

698 Compare the disquisition on fame in "Lycidas," 70—84 700 "And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints" (Jude, 14) 706 Compare the variant, iii, 522. 707 **as thou saw'st** a formula here not true: cf. ii, 796; viii, 446 709 to **show thee what** cf. 357

Awaits the good, the rest what punishment;
Which now direct thine eyes and soon behold.'

He looked, and saw the face of things quite changed.
The brazen throat of war had ceased to roar;
All now was turned to jollity and game,
To luxury^o and riot, feast and dance,
Marrying or prostituting, as befell,
Rape or adultery, where passing fair
Allured them; thence from cups to civil broils.
At length a reverend sire^o among them came,

And of their doings great dislike declared,
 And testified against their ways; he oft
 Frequented their assemblies, whereso met,
 Triumphs or festivals, and to them preached
 Conversion and repentance, as to souls
 In prison under judgements imminent,^o
 But all in vain: which when he saw, he ceased
 Contending, and removed his tents far off;
 Then, from the mountain hewing timber tall,
 Began to build a vessel of huge bulk,^o
 Measured by cubit, length, and breadth, and height
 Smeared round with pitch, and in the side a door
 Contrived, and of provisions laid in large
 For man and beast; when lo, a wonder strange!
 Of every beast, and bird, and insect small,
 Came sevens and pairs, and entered in, as taught
 Their order; last, the sire and his three sons,
 With their four wives; and God made fast the door.
 Meanwhile the south wind rose, and, with black wings
 Wide-hovering, all the clouds together drove
 From under heaven; the hills, to their supply,
 Vapour, and exhalation dusk and moist,
 Sent up amain; and now the thickened sky
 Like a dark ceiling^o stood: down rushed the rain
 Impetuous, and continued till the earth

715 **luxury** lust 719 **reverend sire** the phrase from "Lycidas," 103, the reference
 Noah 724-25 In the words of St. Peter, Noah "went and preached unto the spirits in
 prison" (1 Peter, iii, 19). 729 **huge bulk** always a floating reference, i, 196; vii, 410
 743 **ceiling** a recollection of the derivation from *caelum*, heaven

No more was seen; the floating vessel swum
 Uplifted, and secure with beakéd prow
 Rode tilting o'er the waves; all dwellings else
 Flood overwhelmed, and them with all their pomp
 Deep under water rolled; sea covered sea,
 Sea without shore,^o and in their palaces,
 Where luxury late reigned, sea-monsters whelped
 And stabled: of mankind, so numerous late,
 All left in one small bottom swum embarked.
 How didst thou grieve then, Adam, to behold
 The end of all thy offspring, end so sad,
 Depopulation; thee another flood,
 Of tears and sorrow a flood, thee also drowned,
 And sunk thee as thy sons, till, gently reared
 By the Angel, on thy feet thou stood'st at last,
 Though comfortless, as when a father mourns
 His children, all in view destroyed at once,
 And scarce to the Angel utter'dst thus thy plaint:
 'O visions ill foreseen! better had I
 Lived ignorant of future, so had borne
 My part of evil only, each day's lot
 Enough to bear; those now that were dispensed
 The burden of many ages on me light
 At once, by my foreknowledge gaining birth
 Abortive, to torment me, ere their being,
 With thought that they must be. Let no man seek
 Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall
 Him or his children—evil, he may be sure,
 Which neither his foreknowing can prevent,
 And he the future evil shall no less
 In apprehension than in substance feel,
 Grievous to bear. But that care now is past;

Man is not whom to warn; those few escaped
Famine and anguish will at last consume,
Wandering that watery desert:° I had hope,
When violence was ceased and war on Earth,
All would have then gone well, peace would have
crowned
With length of happy days the race of Man,

750 **Sea without shore** cf. ii, 912, 939—40; also ix, 117 779 cf. ii, 973

But I was far deceived, for now I see
Peace to corrupt no less than war to waste.
How comes it thus? Unfold, Celestial Guide,
And whether here the race of Man° will end.’

To whom thus Michael: ‘Those whom last thou saw’st
In triumph and luxurious wealth are they
First seen in acts of prowess eminent
And great exploits, but of true virtue void;
Who, having spilt much blood, and done much waste,
Subduing nations, and achieved thereby
Fame in the world, high titles, and rich prey,
Shall change their course to pleasure, ease, and sloth,
Surfeit, and lust, till wantonness and pride
Raise out of friendship hostile deeds in peace.
The conquered, also, and enslaved by war,
Shall, with their freedom lost, all virtue lose,
And fear of God, from whom their piety feigned
In sharp contest of battle found no aid
Against invaders; therefore, cooled in zeal,
Thenceforth shall practise how to live secure,
Worldly or dissolute, on what their lords
Shall leave them to enjoy, for the Earth shall bear
More than enough, that temperance may be tried.
So all shall turn degenerate, all depraved,
Justice and temperance, truth and faith, forgot;
One man except,° the only son of light
In a dark age, against example good,
Against allurement, custom, and a world
Offended; fearless of reproach and scorn,
Or violence, he of their wicked ways
Shall them admonish, and before them set
The paths of righteousness, how much more safe
And full of peace,° denouncing wrath to come
On their impenitence, and shall return
Of them derided, but of God observed
The one just man alive: by his command
Shall build a wondrous ark, as thou beheld’st,
To save himself and household from amidst

786 **the race of Man** cf. 13, 782, and ii, 382; iii, 161, 280, 679; vii, 155 808 **One man except** cf. ix, 545 815 **And full of peace** cf. ix, 1126

A world devote to universal wrack.
No sooner he, with them of man and beast
Select for life, shall in the ark be lodged
And sheltered round, but all the cataracts
Of Heaven set open on the Earth shall pour
Rain day and night; all fountains of the deep,
Broke up, shall heave the ocean to usurp
Beyond all bounds, till inundation rise
Above the highest hills: then shall this Mount
Of Paradise by might of waves be moved
Out of his place, pushed by the hornèd flood,
With all his verdure spoiled, and trees adrift,

Down the great river to the opening Gulf,
 And there take root, an island salt and bare,
 The haunt of seals, and orcs,^o and sea-mews' clang,^o
 To teach thee that God attributes to place
 No sanctity, if none be thither brought
 By men who there frequent or therein dwell.
 And now what further shall ensue behold.'

He looked, and saw the ark hull^o on the flood,
 Which now abated, for the clouds were fled,
 Driven by a keen north wind, that, blowing dry,
 Wrinkled the face of deluge, as decayed;
 And the clear sun on his wide watery glass
 Gazed hot, and of the fresh wave largely drew,
 As after thirst; which made their flowing shrink
 From standing lake to tripping ebb, that stole
 With soft foot towards the deep, who now had stopped
 His sluices, as the Heaven his windows shut.^o
 The ark no more now floats, but seems on ground,
 Fast on the top of some high mountain fixed.
 And now the tops of hills as rocks appear;
 With clamour thence the rapid currents^o drive
 Towards the retreating sea their furious tide.
 Forthwith from out the ark a raven flies,
 And, after him, the surer messenger,
 A dove, sent forth once and again to spy
 Green tree or ground whereon his foot may light;

835 **ores** whales **clang** cf. vii, 422 840 **hull** to drift to and fro 849 "the windows of
 heaven were stopped" (Gen. viii, 2) 853 **rapid currents** cf. iv, 227

The second time returning, in his bill
 An olive-leaf he brings, pacific sign.
 Anon dry ground appears, and from his ark
 The ancient sire descends, with all his train;
 Then, with uplifted hands and eyes devout,
 Grateful to Heaven, over his head beholds
 A dewy cloud, and in the cloud a bow
 Conspicuous with three listed^o colours gay,
 Betokening peace from God, and covenant new.
 Whereat the heart of Adam, erst so sad,
 Greatly rejoiced, and thus his joy broke forth:
 'O thou, who^o future things canst represent
 As present, Heavenly Instructor, I revive
 At this last sight, assured that Man shall live,
 With all the creatures, and their seed preserve.
 Far less I now lament for one whole world
 Of wicked sons destroyed than I rejoice
 For one man found so perfect and so just
 That God vouchsafes to raise another world^o
 From him, and all his anger to forget.
 But say, what mean those coloured streaks in Heaven,
 Distended as the brow of God appeased?
 Or serve they as a flowery verge to bind
 The fluid skirts of that same watery cloud,
 Lest it again dissolve and shower the Earth?'

To whom the Archangel: 'Dextrously thou aim'st.
 So willingly doth God remit his ire:
 Though late^o repenting him of Man depraved,
 Grieved at his heart, when, looking down, he saw
 The whole Earth filled with violence, and all flesh
 Corrupting each their way, yet, those removed,
 Such grace shall one just man^o find in his sight
 That he relents, not to blot out mankind,

And makes a covenant never to destroy
The Earth again by flood, nor let the sea
Surpass his bounds, nor rain to drown the world
With man therein or beast; but, when he brings

866 **listed** striped (the three colors being red, yellow, and blue) 870 **who** *that*, 1667
877 **another world** cf. ii, 347, 1004; v, 569; vii, 155 886 **late** lately 890 **just man** a
theme of this book, 577, 681, 818; also, vii, 570

Over the Earth a cloud, will therein set
His triple-coloured bow, whereon to look
And call to mind his covenant. Day and night,
Seed-time and harvest, heat and hoary frost,
Shall hold their course, till fire purge all things new,
Both Heaven and Earth, wherein the just shall dwell.'

BOOK XII

THE ARGUMENT

The Angel Michael continues, from the Flood, to relate what shall succeed: then, in the mention of Abraham, comes by degrees to explain who that Seed of the Woman shall be which was promised Adam and Eve in the Fall: his incarnation, death, resurrection, and ascension; the state of the Church till his second coming. Adam, greatly satisfied and recomfited by these relations and promises, descends the hill with Michael; wakens Eve, who all this while had slept, but with gentle dreams composed to quietness of mind and submission. Michael in either hand leads them out of Paradise, the fiery sword waving behind them, and the Cherubim taking their stations to guard the place.

As one who, in his journey, baits at noon,
Though bent on speed, so here the Archangel paused
Betwixt the world destroyed and world restored,
If Adam aught perhaps might interpose,
Then, with transition sweet, new speech resumes:°
‘Thus thou hast seen one world begin and end,
And Man as from a second stock proceed.
Much thou hast yet to see; but I perceive
Thy mortal sight to fail; objects divine
Must needs impair and weary human sense:°
Henceforth what is to come I will relate;
Thou, therefore, give due audience, and attend.
‘This second source of men, while yet but few,
And while the dread of judgement past remains
Fresh in their minds, fearing the Deity,
With some regard to what is just and right
Shall lead their lives, and multiply apace,

1-5 added for the 1674 edition, and thus the last poetry Milton wrote 10 **human sense** cf. iv, 206; v, 565, 572; ix, 554, 871

Labouring the soil, and reaping plenteous crop,
Corn, wine, and oil; and, from the herd or flock
Oft sacrificing bullock, lamb, or kid,
With large wine-offerings poured, and sacred feast,
Shall spend their days in joy unblamed, and dwell
Long time in peace, by families and tribes,
Under paternal rule, till one° shall rise,
Of proud, ambitious heart, who, not content
With fair equality, fraternal state,
Will arrogate dominion undeserved
Over his brethren, and quite dispossess
Concord and law of Nature from the Earth—
Hunting (and men, not beasts, shall be his game)
With war and hostile snare such as refuse
Subjection to his empire tyrannous:
A mighty hunter thence he shall be styled
Before the Lord, as in despite of Heaven,
Of from Heaven claiming second sovranity,
And from rebellion shall derive his name,
Though of rebellion others he accuse.
He, with a crew whom like ambition joins
With him or under him to tyrannize,
Marching from Eden towards the west, shall find
The plain wherein a black bituminous gurge
Boils out from under ground, the mouth of Hell.°

Of brick, and of that stuff, they cast to build
 A city and tower, whose top may reach to Heaven,
 And get themselves a name, lest, far dispersed
 In foreign lands, their memory be lost,
 Regardless whether good or evil fame.
 But God, who oft descends to visit^o men
 Unseen, and through their habitations walks
 To mark their doings, them beholding soon,
 Comes down to see their city, ere the tower
 Obstruct Heaven-towers, and in derision sets

24 **one** Nimrod, noted as “the first that founded monarchy” in *Eikonoklastes* and a type of pride (25) in Dante’s *Purgatorio*. Milton had ample nonbiblical authority for making him the builder of Babel—44 (“ikon for Satan and Pandemonium”—Broadbent, cf. 42). 42 **the mouth of Hell** ends x, 288, 636 48 **oft . . . to visit** cf. *to visit oft*, iii, 532, 661; vii. 570

Upon their tongues a various^o spirit, to rase
 Quite out their native language, and, instead,
 To sow a jangling noise of words unknown;
 Forthwith a hideous gabble rises loud
 Among the builders; each to other calls,
 Not understood, till, hoarse and all in rage,
 As mocked they storm; great laughter was in Heaven,
 And looking down to see the hubbub strange
 And hear the din: thus was the building left
 Ridiculous, and the work *Confusion* named.’

Whereto thus Adam, fatherly displeased:
 ‘O execrable son, so to aspire
 Above his brethren, to himself assuming
 Authority usurped, from God not given:
 He gave us only over beast, fish, fowl,
 Dominion absolute; that right we hold
 By his donation, but man over men
 He made not lord, such title to himself
 Reserving, human left from human free.
 But this usurper his encroachment proud
 Stays not on Man; to God his tower intends
 Siege and defiance. Wretched man! what food^o
 Will he convey up thither, to sustain
 Himself and his rash army, where thin air
 Above the clouds will pine his entrails gross,
 And famish him of breath, if not of bread?’

To whom thus Michael: ‘Justly thou abhorr’st
 That son, who on the quiet state of men
 Such trouble brought, affecting to subdue
 Rational liberty; yet know withal,
 Since thy original lapse, true liberty
 Is lost, which always with right reason dwells
 Twinned, and from her hath no dividual being.
 Reason in Man obscured, or not obeyed,
 Immediately inordinate desires
 And upstart passions catch the government

53 **various** quarrelsome 74 ff. A hit, so to speak, at skyscrapers. Josephus quotes Nimrod as saying “he would be avenged on God; if he should have a mind to drown the world again; for that he would build a tower too high for the waters to be able to reach!”

From Reason, and to servitude reduce
 Man, till then free. Therefore, since he permits
 Within himself unworthy powers to reign
 Over free reason, God, in judgement just,
 Subjects him from without to violent lords,

Who oft as undeservedly enthal
 His outward freedom. Tyranny must be,
 Though to the tyrant thereby no excuse.
 Yet sometimes nations will decline so low
 From virtue, which is reason, that no wrong,
 But justice, and some fatal curse annexed,
 Deprives them of their outward liberty,
 Their inward lost: witness the irreverent son^o
 Of him who built the ark, who, for the shame
 Done to his father, heard this heavy curse,
Servant of servants,^o on his vicious race.
 Thus will this latter, as the former world,^o
 Still tend from bad to worse, till God at last,
 Wearied with their iniquities, withdraw
 His presence from among them, and avert
 His holy eyes, resolving from thenceforth
 To leave them to their own polluted ways,
 And one peculiar nation to select
 From all the rest, of whom to be invoked—
 A nation from one faithful man^o to spring:
 Him on this side Euphrates yet residing,
 Bred up in idol-worship. Oh, that men
 (Canst thou believe?) should be so stupid grown,
 While yet the patriarch lived who 'scaped the Flood,^o
 As to forsake the living God,^o and fall

101 **irreverent son** Ham, father of Canaan 104 Noah “said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren” (Gen. ix, 25). 105 ff. Interesting is the parallel with Theseus’ speech (Euripides, *Hippolytus*, 938 ff.), “O the mind of mortal man! to what lengths will it proceed? What limit will its bold assurance have? for if it goes on growing as man’s life advances, and each successor outdo the man before him in villainy, the gods will have to add another sphere unto the world, which shall take in the knaves and villains.” But *vicious race*, 104, is Horace’s *progeniem vitiosiore* (*Carm.* III, vi, 48). 113 **one faithful man** Abraham, cf. 152 117 **'scaped the Flood** cf. i, 239 118 cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 1140 (“The living God” is a phrase that occurs two dozen times in the Bible.)

To worship their own work in wood and stone
 For gods!—yet him God the Most High vouchsafes
 To call by vision from his father’s house,
 His kindred, and false gods, into a land
 Which he will show him and from him will raise
 A mighty nation, and upon him shower
 His benediction so, that in his seed
 All nations shall be blessed; he straight obeys,
 Not knowing to what land, yet firm believes.
 I see him, but thou canst not, with what faith^o
 He leaves his gods, his friends, and native soil,
 Ur of Chaldaea, passing now the ford
 To Haran,^o after him a cumbrous train
 Of herds and flocks, and numerous servitude,
 Not wandering poor, but trusting all his wealth
 With God, who called him, in a land unknown.
 Canaan he now attains; I see his tents
 Pitched about Shechem and the neighbouring plain
 Of Moreh. There, by promise, he receives
 Gift to his progeny of all that land,
 From Hamath northward to the Desert south
 (Things by their names I call, though yet unnamed),
 From Hermon^o east to the great western sea;^o
 Mount Hermon, yonder sea, each place behold
 In prospect, as I point them: on the shore,
 Mount Carmel; here, the double-founted^o stream,

Jordan, true limit eastward; but his sons°
 Shall dwell to Senir, that long ridge of hills.
 This ponder, that all nations of the Earth
 Shall in his seed be blessed; by that seed
 Is meant thy great Deliverer, who shall bruise

128 Michael, having employed visions in Book XI, is now using direct narrative (as explained, xii, 8-12). **with what faith** cf. Hebrews, xi, 8 131 **Haran** a town in Mesopotamia on an affluent of the Euphrates, where Abraham settled on leaving Ur and where he received God's bidding to journey to Canaan (Gen. xii, 1—4) 132 **servitude** abstract for concrete—servants 141 **Hermon** the highest mountain of Palestine **the great western sea** the Mediterranean 144 **double-founded** It was Jerome's mistaken belief that two streams, a Jor and a Dan, joined to make the Jordan. 145 **his sons** 1 Chronicles, v, 23

The Serpent's head;° whereof to thee anon
 Plainlier shall be revealed. This patriarch blessed,
 Whom *faithful Abraham* due time shall call,
 A son, and of his son a grandchild,° leaves,
 Like him in faith, in wisdom, and renown,
 The grandchild, with twelve sons increased, departs
 From Canaan to a land hereafter called
 Egypt, divided by the river Nile;
 See where it flows, disgorging at seven mouths
 Into the sea; to sojourn in that land
 He comes, invited by a younger son°
 In time of dearth, a son whose worthy deeds
 Raise him to be the second in that realm
 Of Pharaoh; there he dies, and leaves his race
 Growing into a nation, and now grown
 Suspected to a sequent king, who seeks
 To stop their overgrowth, as inmate guests
 Too numerous; whence of guests he makes them slaves
 Inhospitably, and kills their infant males:
 Till, by two brethren (those two brethren call
 Moses and Aaron) sent from God to claim
 His people from enthrallment, they return,
 With glory and spoil, back to their promised land.
 But first the lawless tyrant, who denies°
 To know their God, or message to regard,
 Must be compelled by signs and judgements dire:
 To blood unshed the rivers must be turned;
 Frogs, lice, and flies must all his palace fill
 With loathed intrusion, and fill all the land;
 His cattle must of rot and murrain die;
 Botches and blains must all his flesh emboss,
 And all his people; thunder mixed with hail,
 Hail mixed with fire, must rend the Egyptian sky,
 And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls;
 What it devours not, herb, or fruit, or grain,
 A darksome cloud of locusts° swarming down
 Must eat, and on the ground leave nothing green;

149—50 **shall bruise/ The Serpent's head** cf. x, 1031-32 153 **grandchild** Jacob 160 **a younger son** Joseph 173—90 Exodus, vii-xii 185 **A darksome cloud of locusts** cf. "a pitchy cloud/ Of locusts," i, 340—41

Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
 Palpable° darkness, and blot out three days;
 Last, with one midnight-stroke, all the first-born
 Of Egypt must lie dead. Thus with ten wounds
 This river-dragon,° tamed at length, submits
 To let his sojourners depart, and oft
 Humbles his stubborn heart, but still as ice

More hardened after thaw; till, in his rage
 Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea
 Swallows him with his host, but them lets pass,
 As on dry land,^o between two crystal walls,^o
 Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand
 Divided till his rescued gain their shore:
 Such wondrous power God to his saint will lend,
 Though present in his Angel, who shall go
 Before them in a cloud, and pillar of fire—
 By day a cloud, by night a pillar of fire—
 To guide them in their journey, and remove
 Behind them, while the obdurate king pursues:
 All night he will pursue, but his approach
 Darkness defends^o between till morning-watch,
 Then through the fiery pillar, and the cloud,
 God looking forth will trouble all his host,
 And craze^o their chariot-wheels, when, by command,
 Moses once more his potent rod^o extends
 Over the sea; the sea his rod obeys,
 On their embattled ranks the waves return
 And overwhelm their war: the race elect
 Safe towards Canaan, from the shore, advance
 Through the wild Desert—not the readiest way,
 Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed,
 War terrify them inexperienced, and fear
 Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
 Inglorious life with servitude, for life^o
 To noble and ignoble is more sweet
 Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on.

188 **Palpable** cf. Exodus, x, 21 191 **This** (*The*, 1674) **river-dragon** Pharaoh 197
dry land cf. i, 227; vii, 307 **crystal walls** cf. vi, 860; vii, 293 207 **defends** forbids,
 as at ix, 86 210 **craze** break to pieces 211 **potent rod** cf. i, 338 220 Compare
Samson Agonistes, 268-71, and contrast ii, 255-57; xi, 798-99.

This also shall they gain by their delay
 In the wide wilderness; there they shall found
 Their government, and their great Senate choose
 Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained.
 God, from the Mount of Sinai, whose grey top
 Shall tremble, he descending, will himself,
 In thunder, lightning, and loud trumpet's sound,^o
 Ordain them laws, part, such as appertain
 To civil justice; part, religious rites
 Of sacrifice, informing them, by types^o
 And shadows, of that destined Seed to bruise
 The Serpent, by what means he shall achieve
 Mankind's deliverance. But the voice of God
 To mortal ear is dreadful: they beseech
 That Moses might report to them his will,
 And terror cease; he grants what they besought,^o
 Instructed that to God is no access
 Without Mediator, whose high office now
 Moses in figure bears, to introduce
 One greater, of whose day he shall foretell,
 And all the Prophets, in their age, the times
 Of great Messiah^o shall sing. Thus laws and rites
 Established, such delight hath God in men
 Obedient to his will, that he vouchsafes
 Among them to set up his tabernacle,
 The Holy One with mortal men^o to dwell;
 By his prescript a sanctuary is framed
 Of cedar, overlaid with gold, therein

An ark, and in the ark his testimony,
 The records of his covenant; over these
 A mercy-seat of gold, between the wings
 Of two bright Cherubim; before him burn
 Seven lamps, as in a zodiac representing
 The heavenly fires; over the ten a cloud
 Shall rest by day, a fiery gleam by night,
 Save when they journey; and at length they come,
 Conducted by his Angel, to the land°

229 **trumpet's sound** cf. i, 754 232 **types** Old Testament prefigurations (cf. 303)
 238 **what they besought** *them their desire* first edition 244 **great Messiah** cf. v, 691
 248 **mortal men** cf. i, 51; iii, 268 (a Homeric expression) 259 "For mine Angel shall
 go before thee" (Ex. xxiii, 23).

Promised to Abraham and his seed—the rest
 Were long to tell: how many battles fought,
 How many kings destroyed, and kingdoms won,
 Or how the sun shall in mid-heaven° stand still°
 A day entire, and night's due course adjourn,
 Man's voice commanding, "Sun, in Gibeon stand,
 And thou, Moon, in the vale of Ajalon,°
 Till Israel overcome"—so call the third
 From Abraham, son of Isaac, and from him
 His whole descent, who thus shall Canaan win.'

Here Adam interposed: 'O sent from Heaven,
 Enlightener of my darkness, gracious things
 Thou hast revealed, those chiefly which concern
 Just Abraham and his seed; now first I find
 Mine eyes true opening, and my heart much eased,
 Erewhile perplexed with thoughts what would become
 Of me and all mankind; but now I see
 His day, in whom all nations shall be blessed—
 Favour unmerited by me, who sought
 Forbidden knowledge° by forbidden means.
 This yet I apprehend not, why to those
 Among whom God will deign to dwell on Earth
 So many and so various laws are given;
 So many laws argue° so many sins
 Among them; how can God with such reside?'

To whom thus Michael: 'Doubt not but that sin
 Will reign among them, as of thee begot;
 And therefore was law given them, to evince
 Their natural pravity, by stirring up
 Sin against Law to fight, that, when they see
 Law can discover sin, but not remove,
 Save by those shadowy expiations weak,
 The blood of bulls and goats, they may conclude
 Some blood more precious must be paid for Man,
 Just for unjust, that in such righteousness,
 To them by faith imputed, they may find
 Justification towards God, and peace

263 **in mid-heaven** cf. iii, 729; vi, 889; ix, 468 263-67 Joshua, x, 12—13 266 A line
 borrowed from Sylvester's *Du Bartas* (as was iii, 373) 279 **Forbidden knowledge**
 cf. iv, 515 283 **argue** indicate

Of conscience, which the law by ceremonies
 Cannot appease, nor Man the moral part
 Perform, and, not performing, cannot live.°
 So law appears imperfect, and but given
 With purpose to resign them, in full time,
 Up to a better covenant, disciplined
 From shadowy types to truth, from flesh to spirit,

From imposition of strict laws^o to free
 Acceptance of large grace, from servile fear
 To filial, works of law to works of faith.
 And therefore shall not Moses, though of God
 Highly beloved, being but the minister
 Of Law, his people into Canaan lead;
 But Joshua,^o whom the Gentiles Jesus call,
 His name and office bearing who shall quell
 The adversary Serpent, and bring back
 Through the world's wilderness long-wandered Man
 Safe to eternal Paradise of rest.
 Meanwhile they, in their earthly Canaan placed,
 Long time shall dwell and prosper, but when sins
 National interrupt their public peace,
 Provoking God to raise them enemies,
 From whom as oft he saves them penitent,
 By Judges first, then under Kings; of whom
 The second, both for piety renowned
 And puissant deeds, a promise shall receive
 Irrevocable, that his regal throne
 For ever shall endure; the like shall sing
 All Prophecy—that of the royal stock
 Of David (so I name this king) shall rise
 A son, the Woman's Seed to thee foretold,
 Foretold to Abraham, as in whom shall trust
 All nations, and to kings foretold of kings
 The last, for of his reign shall be no end.
 But first a long succession must ensue;
 And his next son,^o for wealth and wisdom famed,
 The clouded ark of God, till then in tents

299 Romans, x, 5 304 **strict laws** cf. ii, 241 310 **Joshua**, whose name means the
 Saviour (like Greek *Jesus*), led the Israelites in the invasion and settlement of
 Canaan. 332 **son** Solomon, the son of David

Wandering, shall in a glorious temple enshrine.
 Such follow him as shall be registered
 Part good, part bad; of bad the longer scroll,
 Whose foul idolatries^o and other faults,
 Heaped to the popular sum,^o will so incense
 God as to leave them, and expose their land,
 Their city, his temple, and his holy ark,
 With all his sacred things, a scorn and prey
 To that proud city^o whose high walls thou saw'st
 Left in confusion, Babylon thence called.
 There in captivity he lets them dwell
 The space of seventy years, then brings them back,
 Remembering mercy, and his covenant sworn
 To David, stablished as the days of Heaven.
 Returned from Babylon by leave of kings,
 Their lords, whom God disposed, the house of God
 They first re-edify,^o and for a while
 In mean estate live moderate, till, grown
 In wealth and multitude, factious they grow.
 But first among the priests dissension springs—
 Men who attend the altar and should most
 Endeavour peace; their strife pollution brings
 Upon the temple itself; at last they seize
 The sceptre, and regard not David's sons,
 Then lose it to a stranger,^o that the true
 Anointed King^o Messiah might be born
 Barred of his right; yet at his birth a star,
 Unseen before in Heaven, proclaims him come,

And guides the eastern sages, who inquire
 His place, to offer incense, myrrh, and gold;
 His place of birth a solemn Angel tells
 To simple shepherds, keeping watch by night;
 They gladly thither^o haste, and by a choir
 Of squadroned Angels hear his carol sung.
 A Virgin is his mother, but his sire
 The Power of the Most High; he shall ascend

337 **foul idolatries** cf. “idols foul,” i, 446 338 **the popular sum** the sins of the
 common people 342 **proud city** cf. ii, 533 348-50 see Ezra 358 **a stranger** Antipater
 the Edomite, father of Herod the Great 359 **Anointed King** cf. v, 664, 777, 870; vi,
 718 366 **thither** to Bethlehem

The throne hereditary, and bound his reign
 With Earth's wide bounds, his glory with the Heavens.'

He ceased, discerning Adam with such joy
 Surcharged as had, like grief, been dewed in tears,^o
 Without the vent of words; which these he breathed:

'O prophet of glad tidings, finisher
 Of utmost hope! now clear I understand
 What oft my steadiest thoughts have searched in vain—
 Why our great Expectation should be called
 The Seed of Woman: Virgin Mother, hail,
 High in the love of Heaven, yet from my loins
 Thou shalt proceed, and from thy womb the Son
 Of God Most High; so God with Man unites.
 Needs must the Serpent now his capital^o bruise
 Expect with mortal pain: say where and when
 Their fight, what stroke shall bruise the Victor's heel.'

To whom thus Michael: 'Dream not of their fight
 As of a duel, of the local wounds
 Of head or heel; not therefore joins the Son
 Manhood to Godhead, with more strength to foil
 Thy enemy, nor so is overcome
 Satan, whose fall from Heaven, a deadlier bruise,
 Disabled not to give thee thy death's wound,^o
 Which he who comes thy Saviour shall recure,
 Not by destroying Satan, but his works
 In thee and in thy seed; nor can this be,
 But by fulfilling that which thou didst want,
 Obedience to the law of God, imposed
 On penalty of death, and suffering death,
 The penalty to thy transgression due,
 And due to theirs which out of thine will grow:
 So only can high justice rest appaid.
 The law of God^o exact he shall fulfil
 Both by obedience and by love, though love
 Alone fulfil the Law; thy punishment
 He shall endure, by coming in the flesh

373 cf. *Samson Agonistes*, 728 383 **capital** (two syllables) fatal, with perhaps some
 reference (despite Michael's admonition, 386-88) to *caput*, head, where Satan first
 felt pain as Sin was born (ii, 752 ff.) and where the Serpent was to be “bruised” 392
death's wound cf. iii, 252 402 **The law of God** cf. 397

To a reproachful life and cursed death,
 Proclaiming life to all who shall believe
 In his redemption, and that his obedience
 Imputed becomes theirs by faith, his merits
 To save them, not their own, though legal, works.
 For this he shall live hated, be blasphemed,
 Seized on by force, judged, and to death condemned
 A shameful and accursed, nailed to the cross

By his own nation, slain for bringing life;
 But to the cross he nails thy enemies:
 The Law that is against thee, and the sins^o
 Of all mankind, with him there crucified,
 Never to hurt them more who rightly trust
 In this his satisfaction; so he dies,
 But soon revives; Death over him no power
 Shall long usurp; ere the third dawning light
 Return, the stars of morn shall see him rise
 Out of his grave, fresh as the dawning light,
 Thy ransom paid, which Man from Death redeems—
 His death for Man, as many as offered life
 Neglect not, and the benefit embrace
 By faith not void of works. This godlike act
 Annuls thy doom, the death thou shouldst have died,
 In sin forever lost from life; this act
 Shall bruise the head of Satan, crush his strength,
 Defeating Sin and Death, his two main arms,
 And fix far deeper in his head their stings
 Than temporal death shall bruise the Victor's heel,
 Or theirs whom he redeems—a death like sleep,
 A gentle wafting to immortal life.
 Nor after resurrection shall he stay
 Longer on Earth than certain times to appear
 To his disciples, men who in his life
 Still followed him; to them shall leave in charge
 To teach all nations what of him they learned
 And his salvation, them who shall believe
 Baptizing in the profluent^o stream—the sign

415-16 Colossians, ii, 14 442 **profluent** flowing. Milton uses in *Christian Doctrine*
 (I, 28) the expression “*in profluentem aquam*” to signify his belief that baptism
 should take place in running water.

Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
 Pure, and in mind prepared, if so befall,
 For death like that which the Redeemer died.
 Not only to the sons of Abraham's loins
 Salvation shall be preached, but to the sons
 Of Abraham's faith wherever through the world;
 So in his seed all nations shall be blessed.^o
 Then to the Heaven of Heavens he shall ascend
 With victory, triumphing through the air
 Over his foes and thine; there shall surprise
 The Serpent, Prince of Air, and drag in chains
 Through all his realm, and there confounded leave;
 Then enter into glory, and resume
 His seat at God's right hand, exalted high
 Above all names in Heaven; and thence shall come,
 When this World's dissolution shall be ripe,
 With glory and power, to judge both quick and dead^o—
 To judge the unfaithful dead, but to reward
 His faithful and receive them into bliss,
 Whether in Heaven or Earth, for then the Earth
 Shall all be Paradise, far happier place
 Than this of Eden, and far happier days.⁷

So spake the Archangel Michael, then paused,
 As at the World's great period,^o and our Sire,
 Replete with joy and wonder, thus replied:
 ‘O goodness infinite,^o goodness immense,
 That all this good of evil^o shall produce,
 And evil turn^o to good, more wonderful

Than that by which creation first brought forth
 Light out of darkness! full of doubt I stand,
 Whether I should repent me now of sin^o
 By me done and occasioned, or rejoice
 Much more that much more good thereof shall spring—
 To God more glory, more good-will to men
 From God—and over wrath grace shall abound.
 But say, if our Deliverer up to Heaven

449 Galatians, iii, 8 459 adapted from the Apostles' Creed 466 **period** end 468
goodness infinite cf. i, 218; iv, 734; also iv, 414; vii, 76 469 **good of evil** cf. i, 163;
 vii, 188 470 **evil turn** cf. xi, 373 473 the doctrine of the happy fall—*felix culpa*, cf.
 587

Must reascend, what will betide the few,
 His faithful, left among the unfaithful herd,^o
 The enemies of truth; who then shall guide
 His people, who defend? will they not deal
 Worse with his followers than with him they dealt?'
 'Be sure they will,' said the Angel; 'but from Heaven
 He to his own a Comforter will send,
 The promise of the Father, who shall dwell,
 His Spirit, within them, and the law of faith
 Working through love upon their hearts shall write,
 To guide them in all truth, and also arm
 With spiritual armour,^o able to resist
 Satan's assaults, and quench his fiery darts,
 What man can do against them, not afraid,
 Though to the death; against such cruelties
 With inward consolations recompensed,
 And oft supported so as shall amaze
 Their proudest persecutors: for the Spirit,^o
 Poured first on his Apostles, whom he sends
 To evangelize the nations, then on all
 Baptized, shall them with wondrous gifts endue
 To speak all tongues, and do all miracles,
 As did their Lord before them. Thus they win
 Great numbers of each nation to receive
 With joy the tidings brought from Heaven; at length,
 Their ministry performed, and race well run,^o
 Their doctrine and their story written left,
 They die, but in their room, as they forewarn,^o
 Wolves shall succeed for teachers, grievous wolves,
 Who all the sacred mysteries of Heaven
 To their own vile advantages shall turn
 Of lucre and ambition, and the truth
 With superstitions and traditions taint,
 Left only in those written records pure,
 Though not but by the Spirit understood.
 Then shall they seek to avail themselves of names,
 Places, and titles, and with these to join

480 compare Abdiel, v, 897 490 Ephesians, vi, 11-17 496—501 Acts, ii 504 **race** . . .
run a Pauline expression found also in *Samson Agonistes*, 597 506 **forewarn** Acts,
 xx, 29

Secular power, though feigning still to act^o
 By spiritual, to themselves appropriating
 The Spirit of God, promised alike and given
 To all believers, and, from that pretence,
 Spiritual laws by carnal power shall force
 On every conscience—laws which none shall find
 Left them enrolled, or what the Spirit within^o
 Shall on the heart engrave. What will they then

But force the Spirit of Grace itself, and bind
 His consort, Liberty; what but unbuild^o
 His living temples, built by faith to stand^o—
 Their own faith, not another's, for on Earth
 Who against faith and conscience can be heard
 Infallible? Yet many will presume,
 Whence heavy persecution shall arise
 On all who in the worship persevere
 Of Spirit and Truth; the rest, far greater part,^o
 Will deem in outward rites and specious forms^o
 Religion satisfied; Truth shall retire
 Bestuck with slanderous darts, and works of Faith^o
 Rarely be found: so shall the World go on,
 To good malignant, to bad men benign,
 Under her own weight groaning,^o till the day
 Appear of respiration^o to the just
 And vengeance to the wicked, at return
 Of him so lately promised to thy aid,
 The Woman's Seed, obscurely then foretold,
 Now amplier known thy Saviour and thy Lord;
 Last in the clouds from Heaven to be revealed
 In glory of the Father, to dissolve^o
 Satan with his perverted World; then raise
 From the conflágrant^o mass, purged and refined,

515-16 **to join/ Secular power** one of the causes of the Civil War in England.
 Milton is carrying on the protests he made as a pamphleteer. 522 **Spirit within** cf.
 487; viii, 440 524-25 2 Corinthians, iii, 17 526 "For the temple of God is holy,
 which temple ye are" (1 Cor. iii, 17) 531-32 John, iv, 23 532 **far greater part** cf. vii,
 145, 359 533 Michael reveals himself a Puritan (rejecting the 1674 reading of *Well*
 for *Will*). 535 **works of Faith** cf. 306 538 "The whole creation groaneth" (Rom. viii,
 22) 539 **respiration** in the Anglican version of Acts, iii, 19, "refreshing" 544-45
 Matthew, xxiv, 30 547 **conflágrant** burning together

New Heavens, new Earth, Ages of endless date
 Founded in righteousness and peace and love,
 To bring forth fruits, joy and eternal bliss.^o
 He ended, and thus Adam last replied:
 'How soon hath thy prediction, Seer blest,
 Measured this transient World, the race of Time,
 Till Time stand fixed: beyond is all abyss,
 Eternity, whose end no eye can reach.
 Greatly instructed I shall hence depart,
 Greatly in peace of thought, and have my fill
 Of knowledge, what this vessel^o can contain,
 Beyond which was my folly to aspire.
 Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,
 And love with fear the only God, to walk
 As in his presence, ever to observe
 His providence, and on him sole depend,
 Merciful over all his works, with good
 Still overcoming evil, and by small
 Accomplishing great things, by things deemed weak
 Subverting worldly-strong, and worldly-wise
 By simply meek, that suffering for Truth's sake
 Is fortitude to highest victory,
 And to the faithful death the gate of life;
 Taught this by his example whom I now
 Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest.'

To whom thus also the Angel last replied:
 'This having learned, thou hast attained the sum
 Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the stars
 Thou knew'st by name, and all the ethereal powers,

All secrets of the deep, all Nature's works,
 Or works of God in heaven, air, earth, or sea,
 And all the riches of this world enjoy'dst,
 And all the rule, one empire. Only add
 Deeds to thy knowledge answerable; add faith;
 Add virtue, patience, temperance; add love,
 By name to come called Charity, the soul
 Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loth
 To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
 A Paradise within thee, happier far.°

550 **joy and . . . bliss** cf. xi, 43 558 **vessel** 1 Thessalonians, iv, 4 586 cf. iv, 20, 75,
 and i, 254-55

Let us descend now, therefore, from this top
 Of speculation;° for the hour precise
 Exacts our parting hence; and see, the guards,
 By me encamped on yonder hill, expect
 Their motion, at whose front a flaming sword,°
 In signal of remove, waves fiercely round.°
 We may no longer stay: go, waken Eve;
 Her also I with gentle dreams have calmed,
 Portending good, and all her spirits composed
 To meek submission: thou, at season fit,
 Let her with thee partake what thou hast heard,
 Chiefly what may concern her faith to know,
 The great deliverance by her seed to come
 (For by the Woman's Seed°) on all mankind,
 That ye may live, which will be many days,°
 Both in one faith unanimous, though sad
 With cause for evils past, yet much more cheered
 With meditation on the happy end.'

He ended, and they both descend the hill;
 Descended, Adam to the bower where Eve
 Lay sleeping ran before, but found her waked,°
 And thus with words not sad she him received:
 'Whence thou return'st and whither went'st I know;
 For God is also in sleep,° and dreams advise,
 Which he hath sent propitious, some great good
 Presaging, since, with sorrow and heart's distress
 Wearied, I fell asleep: but now lead on;
 In me is no delay;° with thee to go
 Is to stay here; without thee here to stay
 Is to go hence unwilling; thou to me
 Art all things under Heaven, all places thou,
 Who for my wilful crime art banished hence.
 This further consolation yet secure
 I carry hence: though all by me is lost,
 Such favour I unworthy am vouchsafed,
 By me the Promised Seed shall all restore.'

588 **speculation** observation 591 **flaming sword** cf. i, 664 591-92 cf. xi, 120-21 600
the Woman's Seed cf. 327, 542; xi, 116 601 930 years (Gen. v. 5) 607 **but found**
her waked contrast the Argument, "wakens Eve" 610 **For God is also in sleep** a
 translation of *Iliad*, I, 63 614 **In me is no delay** a translation of Virgil, *Eclogues*, III,
 52

So spake our Mother Eve; and Adam heard
 Well pleased, but answered not, for now too nigh
 The Archangel stood, and from the other hill
 To their fixed station, all in bright array°
 The Cherubim descended, on the ground
 Gliding meteorous, as evening mist,
 Risen from a river, o'er the marish° glides,

And gathers ground fast at the labourer's heel
 Homeward returning. High in front advanced,
 The brandished sword of God before them blazed,
 Fierce as a comet, which° with torrid heat,
 And vapour° as the Libyan air adust,°
 Began to parch that temperate clime; whereat
 In either hand the hastening Angel caught
 Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate°
 Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
 To the subjected° plain; then disappeared.
 They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
 Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,°
 Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
 With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:
 Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
 The world was all before them,° where to choose
 Their place of rest, and Providence their guide;
 They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,°
 Through Eden took their solitary way.

626 in **bright array** cf. vi, 801 629 marish marsh 633 **which** the sword 634 **vapour**
 waves of heat **adust** burnt 636-37 cf. Genesis, xix, 16 637 **to the eastern gate** xi,
 190; also iv, 542 639 **subjected** literally, underlying 641 **happy seat** cf. ii, 347; iii,
 632; iv, 247; vi, 226 645 This famous line was perhaps suggested by Mowbray's
 words on being exiled (*Richard II*, I, iii, 206-07):

"Farewell, my liege. Now no way can I stray;
 Save back to England, all the world's my way." 647 Harking back to iv, 321, 689

SAMSON AGONISTES

The main, very likely the only, source of *Samson Agonistes* is Judges, xiii—xvi, with emphasis on 21—30 of xvi. It is impressive what a transformation has been wrought in the rather oafish folk-tale character of the Old Testament to give him tragic stature worthy of the two Greek plays Milton had most in mind as models, Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* and Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*. For instance, the episode of the foxes' tails used as firebrands (xv, 4—5) is beneath Milton's notice, and "the jawbone of an ass" (xv, 16) strikes him as "a trivial weapon" (*Samson Agonistes*, 142, 263).

Self-identification must have lent its heightening or deepening force. The parallels are numerous—a champion of his people, "my breeding ordered and prescribed / As of a person separate to God, / Designed for great exploits" (30—32), who, betrayed by a wife from the enemy side, languishes blind and helpless in the midst of a ruined cause. It is almost too easy to see Mary Powell Milton in Dalila (as in Eve), and correspondences present themselves between Harapha and Salmasius, Milton's own father and Manoa, one chosen but relapsing people and another. Lines 693—96 look like a topical allusion (see *The Life of Milton*, p. xliii); 697 ff. comes from a gout-sufferer; 566—71 corroborates Richardson's picture of "Milton sitting in an elbow chair, black clothes and neat enough, pale but not cadaverous, his hands and fingers gouty and with chalk stones. Among other discourse he expressed himself to this purpose: that was he free from the pain this gave him, his blindness would be tolerable."

Agonistes in Greek means a contestant in the games: that is, Milton was dealing with the last phase of Samson's career (what he once titled in manuscript "Dagonalia"), the blind *wrestler or athlete* at the public games of the Philistines. *Agonize* in the seventeenth century meant to *play the champion* and had nothing to do with inner torment. Milton was defining the scope of his play (in the 1640s he had listed other phases of Samson's history as possible subjects), even as Aeschylus distinguished *Prometheus Bound* from *Prometheus Unbound*.

Note that all the names are recessive, that is, accented on the first syllable.

SAMSON AGONISTES

OF THAT SORT OF DRAMATIC POEM WHICH IS CALLED TRAGEDY

TRAGEDY, as it was anciently composed, hath been ever held the gravest, moralest, and most profitable of all other poems, therefore said by Aristotle^o to be of power by raising pity and fear, or terror, to purge the mind of those and such-like passions, that is, to temper and reduce them to just measure with a kind of delight, stirred up by reading or seeing those passions well imitated. Nor is Nature wanting in her own effects to make good his assertion; for so, in physic,^o things of melancholic hue and quality are used against melancholy, sour against sour, salt to remove salt humours. Hence philosophers and other gravest writers, as Cicero, Plutarch, and others, frequently cite out of tragic poets, both to adorn and illustrate their discourse. The Apostle Paul himself thought it not unworthy to insert a verse of Euripides into the text of Holy Scripture, 1 Corinthians xv, 33; and Paraeus,^o commenting on the Revelation, divides the whole book, as a tragedy, into acts, distinguished each by a Chorus of heavenly harpings and song between. Heretofore men in highest dignity have laboured not a little to be thought able to compose a tragedy. Of that honour Dionysius the elder^o was no less ambitious than before of his attaining to the tyranny. Augustus Caesar also had begun his *Ajax*, but, unable to please his own judgement with what he had begun, left it unfinished. Seneca the philosopher is by some thought the author of those tragedies (at least the best of them) that go under that name. Gregory Nazianzen,^o a Father of the Church, thought it not unbeseeming the sanctity of his person to write a tragedy, which he entitled *Christ Suffering*. This is mentioned to vindicate Tragedy from the small esteem, or rather infamy, which in the account of many it undergoes at this day, with other common interludes; happening through the poet's error of intermixing comic stuff with tragic sadness and gravity,^o or introducing trivial and vulgar persons, which by all judicious hath been counted absurd, and brought in without discretion, corruptly to gratify the people. And, though ancient Tragedy use no Prologue,^o yet using sometimes, in case of self-defence or explanation, that which Martial calls an Epistle; in behalf of this tragedy, coming forth after the ancient manner, much different from what among us passes for best,^o thus much beforehand may be *epistled*—that Chorus is here introduced after the Greek manner, not ancient only but modern, and still in use among the Italians. In the modelling therefore of this poem, with good reason the Ancients and Italians are rather followed, as of much more authority and fame. The measure of verse used in the Chorus is of all sorts, called by the Greeks *Monostrophic*, or rather *Apolelymenon*,^o without regard had to Strophe, Antistrophe, or Epode; which were a kind of stanzas framed only for the music, then used with the Chorus that sung; not essential to the poem, and therefore not material; or, being divided into stanzas or pauses, they may be called *Allaeostropha*.^o Division into act and scene, referring chiefly to the stage (to which this work never was intended), is here omitted.

Aristotle in his *Poetics*, VI **physic** homeopathic medicine **Paraeus** David (1548-1622). German Calvinist **Dionysius the elder** (C. 430-367 B.C.) Tyrant of Syracuse from 405, he won first prize in tragedy at Athens the year he died.

It suffices if the whole drama be found not produced beyond the fifth act. Of the style and uniformity, and that commonly called the plot, whether intricate or explicit—which is nothing indeed but such economy, or

Gregory Nazianzen now thought to be by a twelfth-century Byzantine Greek, though the fourth-century “Father of the Church” wrote poems **gravity** an Elizabethan mixture **Prologue** preface **best** e.g., Shakespearean tragedy. *Apolelymenon* a Greek word meaning *freed* (that is, from the obligation to follow a set pattern) *Allaeostropha* having irregular strophes or stanzas

disposition of the fable, as may stand best with verisimilitude and decorum—they only will best judge who are not unacquainted with Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, the three tragic poets unequalled yet by any, and the best rule to all who endeavour to write Tragedy. The circumscription of time, wherein the whole drama begins and ends, is, according to ancient rule and best example, within the space of twenty-four hours.

THE ARGUMENT

Samson, made captive, blind, and now in the prison at Gaza, there to labour as in a common workhouse, on a festival day, in the general cessation from labour, comes forth into the open air to a place nigh, somewhat retired, there to sit a while and bemoan his condition, where he happens at length to be visited by certain friends and equals of his tribe, which make the Chorus, who seek to comfort him what they can; then by his old father, Manoa, who endeavours the like, and withal tells him his purpose to procure his liberty by ransom; lastly, that this feast was proclaimed by the Philistines as a day of thanksgiving for their deliverance from the hands of Samson—which yet more troubles him. Manoa then departs to prosecute his endeavour with the Philistian lords for Samson's redemption; who, in the meanwhile, is visited by other persons, and, lastly, by a public officer to require his coming to the feast before the lords and people, to play or show his strength in their presence; he at first refuses, dismissing the public officer with absolute denial to come; at length, persuaded inwardly that this was from God, he yields to go along with him, who came now the second time with great threatenings to fetch him; the Chorus yet remaining on the place, Manoa returns full of joyful hope to procure ere long his son's deliverance; in the midst of which discourse an Hebrew comes in haste, confusedly at first, and afterwards more distinctly, relating the catastrophe, what Samson had done to the Philistines, and by accident to himself; wherewith the Tragedy ends.

THE PERSONS

SAMSON
MANOA, the father of Samson
DALILA, his wife
HARAPHA of Gath
Public Officer
Messenger
Chorus of Danites

The Scene before the Prison in GAZA

Sam. A little onward lend thy guiding hand
To these dark steps, a little further on,
For yonder bank hath choice of sun or shade;
There I am wont to sit, when any chance
Relieves me from my task of servile toil,
Daily in the common prison else enjoined me,
Where I, a prisoner chained, scarce freely draw
The air, imprisoned also, close and damp,
Unwholesome draught: but here I feel amends,
The breath of Heaven fresh blowing, pure and sweet,
With day-spring born; here leave me to respire.
This day a solemn feast the people hold
To Dagon,^o their sea-idol, and forbid
Laborious works, unwillingly this rest
Their superstition yields me; hence, with leave
Retiring from the popular noise, I seek
This unfrequented place to find some ease,
Ease to the body some, none to the mind
From restless thoughts, that, like a deadly swarm
Of hornets armed, no sooner found alone
But rush upon me thronging, and present
Times past, what once I was, and what am now.
Oh, wherefore was my birth from Heaven foretold
Twice by an Angel, who at last, in sight
Of both my parents, all in flames ascended
From off the altar, where an offering burned,
As in a fiery column charioting
His godlike presence, and from some great act
Or benefit revealed to Abraham's race?
Why was my breeding ordered and prescribed
As of a person separate^o to God,

13 **Dagon** half fish (so the etymology), as described in *Paradise Lost*, i, 462 ff.,
deity of the Philistines that had a famous temple at Gaza, their southern border city
31 **separate** the etymological meaning of Nazarite, which Samson was (cf. 318)

Designed for great exploits, if I must die
Betrayed, captived, and both my eyes put out,
Made of my enemies the scorn and gaze,
To grind in brazen fetters under task
With this heaven-gifted strength? O glorious strength
Put to the labour of a beast, debased
Lower than bond-slave! Promise was that I
Should Israel from Philistian yoke deliver;
Ask for this great deliverer now, and find him
Eyeless in Gaza at the mill with slaves,
Himself in bonds under Philistian yoke;
Yet stay, let me not rashly call in doubt
Divine prediction; what if all foretold

Had been fulfilled but through mine own default?
 Whom have I to complain of but myself
 Who this high gift^o of strength committed to me,
 In what part lodged, how easily bereft me,
 Under the seal of silence could not keep,
 But weakly to a woman must reveal it,
 O'ercome with importunity and tears?
 O impotence of mind, in body strong!
 But what is strength without a double share
 Of wisdom? vast, unwieldy, burdensome,
 Proudly secure,^o yet liable to fall^o
 By weakest subtleties; not made to rule,
 But to subserve where wisdom bears command.
 God, when he gave me strength, to show withal
 How slight the gift was, hung it in my hair.
 But peace, I must not quarrel with the will
 Of highest dispensation, which herein
 Haply had ends above my reach to know;^o
 Suffices that to me strength is my bane,
 And proves the source of all my miseries,
 So many, and so huge, that each apart
 Would ask a life to wail, but chief of all,
 O loss of sight, of thee I most complain!

47 **gift** object of *keep* (49) 53—55 **strength without . . . wisdom . . . unwieldy . . . liable to fall** These words can serve as a translation of Horace's *Carmina*, III, iv, 65: *Vis consili expers mole ruit sua*. A traveler in Milton's day said that "Gaza . . . signifieth strong." 55 **secure** heedless of danger 62 the ultimate message

Blind among enemies, O worse than chains,
 Dungeon, or beggary, or decrepit age!
 Light, the prime work of God, to me is^o extinct,
 And all her various objects of delight
 Annulled, which might in part my grief have eased;
 Inferior to the vilest now become
 Of man or worm, the vilest here excel me,
 They creep, yet see; I, dark in light, exposed
 To daily fraud, contempt, abuse, and wrong,
 Within doors, or without, still as a fool,
 In power of others, never in my own,
 Scarce half I seem to live, dead more than half.
 O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon,^o
 Irrecoverably dark, total eclipse,
 Without all^o hope of day!
 O first-created beam, and thou great Word,
 'Let there be light, and light was over all,'^o
 Why am I thus bereaved thy prime decree?
 The Sun to me is dark
 And silent^o as the Moon,
 When she deserts the night,
 Hid in her vacant^o interlunar cave.
 Since light so necessary is to life,
 And almost life itself, if it be true
 That light is in the soul,
 She all in every part, why was the sight
 To such a tender ball as the eye confined,
 So obvious and so easy to be quenched,
 And not, as feeling, through all parts diffused,
 That she might look at will through every pore?
 Then had I not been thus exiled from light,
 As in the land of darkness, yet in light,
 To live a life half dead, a living death,^o
 And buried; but, O yet more miserable!

70 **me is** contract 80 ff. compare “East Coker,” III, of T. S. Eliot’s *Four Quartets* 82 **all** any 84 cf. *Paradise Lost*, vii, 243 87 **silent** i.e., withdrawn 89 **vacant** a word related to vacation: the Moon has withdrawn into a cave (so the ancients accounted for her disappearance: compare the Endymion myth) and is not performing her usual duties. 100 **a living death** a common phrase in authors before Milton and used by him in *Paradise Lost*, x, 788

Myself my sepulchre, a moving grave,
 Buried, yet not exempt
 By privilege of death and burial
 From worst of other evils, pains, and wrongs,
 But made hereby obnoxious^o more
 To all the miseries of life,
 Life in captivity
 Among inhuman foes.
 But who are these? for with joint pace I hear
 The tread of many feet steering this way;
 Perhaps my enemies, who come to stare
 At my affliction, and perhaps to insult,
 Their daily practice to afflict me more.
Chor. This, this is he; softly a while;
 Let us not break in upon him.
 O change beyond report, thought, or belief!
 See how he lies at random, carelessly diffused,^o
 With languished head unpropped,
 As one past hope, abandoned,
 And by himself given over,
 In slavish habit,^o ill-fitted weeds^o
 O’erworn and soiled;
 Or do my eyes misrepresent? Can this be he,
 That heroic, that renowned,
 Irresistible Samson? whom, unarmed,
 No strength of man or fiercest wild beast could withstand,
 Who tore the lion as the lion tears the kid,
 Ran on embattled armies clad in iron,
 And, weaponless himself,
 Made arms ridiculous, useless the forgery
 Of brazen shield and spear, the hammered cuirass,^o
 Chalybean-tempered^o steel, and frock of mail
 Adamantean proof,^o
 But safest he who stood aloof
 When insupportably his foot advanced,
 In scorn of their proud arms and warlike tools,

106 **obnoxious** exposed, like *obvious* (95) 118 **diffused** “poured out” 122 **habit** dress **weeds** garments 132 **cuirass** breastplate 133 **Chalybean-tempered** The Chalybes were renowned ironworkers, who dwelt on the southern shore of the Black Sea 134 **Adamantean proof** made of adamant, the hardest substance, or proof against weapons of adamant

Spurned them to death by troops. The bold Ascalonite^o
 Fled from his lion ramp;^o old warriors turned
 Their plated backs under his heel,
 Or grovelling soiled their crested helmets in the dust.
 Then with what trivial weapon^o came to hand,
 The jaw of a dead ass, his sword of bone,
 A thousand foreskins fell, the flower of Palestine,^o
 In Ramath-lechi, famous to this day;^o
 Then by main force pulled up and on his shoulders bore
 The gates of Azza,^o post and massy bar,
 Up to the hill by Hebron,^o seat of giants^o old,
 No journey of a sabbath-day, and loaded so,
 Like whom the Gentiles feign to bear up Heaven.^o

Which shall I first bewail,
 Thy bondage or lost sight,
 Prison within prison
 Inseparably dark?
 Thou art become (O worst imprisonment!)
 The dungeon of thyself; thy soul
 (Which men enjoying sight oft without cause complain)
 Imprisoned now indeed,
 In real darkness of the body dwells,
 Shut up from outward light
 To incorporate with gloomy night;
 For inward light, alas!
 Puts forth no visual beam.
 O mirror of our fickle state,^o
 Since man on earth, unparalleled,^o
 The rarer thy example stands,
 By how much from the top of wondrous glory,
 Strongest of mortal men,
 To lowest pitch of abject fortune thou art fallen.^o

138 **The bold Ascalonite** see Judges, xiv, 19 139 **ramp** fiercely rearing 142 **trivial weapon** (cf. 263); “the jawbone of an ass” of Judges, xv, 16. 144 a reference to the uncircumcised Philistines (cf. 260) 145 Judges, xv, 17 (with marginal note) 147 **Azza** Gaza 148 **Hebron** one of the oldest cities in the world, twenty miles south of Jerusalem **seat of giants** see Numbers, xiii, 33 150 the Atlas myth 164 **fickle state** cf. *Paradise Lost*, ix, 948 165 cf. *Paradise Lost*, i, 573 167—69 A fall from a great height was the figurative basis of Greek tragedy as analyzed by Aristotle.

For him I reckon not in high estate
 Whom long descent of birth
 Or the sphere of fortune raises;
 But thee, whose strength, while virtue was her mate,
 Might have subdued the Earth,
 Universally crowned with highest praises.

Sam. I hear the sound of words; their sense the air
 Dissolves unjointed ere it reach my ear.

Chor. He speaks: let us draw nigh. Matchless in might,^o
 The glory late of Israel, now the grief,
 We come, thy friends and neighbours not unknown,
 From Eshtaol and Zora's^o fruitful vale,
 To visit or bewail thee; or, if better,
 Counsel or consolation we may bring,
 Salve to thy sores: apt words have power to 'suage
 The tumours of a troubled mind,
 And are as balm to festered wounds.^o

Sam. Your coming, friends, revives me, for I learn
 Now of my own experience, not by talk,
 How counterfeit a coin they are who ‘friends’
 Bear in their superscription (of the most
 I would be understood); in prosperous days
 They swarm, but in adverse withdraw their head,^o
 Not to be found, though sought. Ye see, O friends,
 How many evils have enclosed me round;^o
 Yet that which was the worst now least afflicts me,
 Blindness; for, had I sight, confused with shame,
 How could I once look up, or heave the head,
 Who, like a foolish pilot, have shipwrecked
 My vessel trusted to me from above,
 Gloriously rigged, and for a word, a tear,
 Fool! have divulged the secret gift of God
 To a deceitful woman: tell me, friends,
 Am I not sung^o and proverbied for a fool
 In every street? do they not say, ‘How well

Are come upon him his deserts"? yet why?

178 **Matchless in might** cf. *Paradise Lost*, x, 404 181 **Eshtaol and Zora** neighbouring towns "in the camp of Dan" (Judg. xiii, 25), the latter being Samson's birthplace 184-86 a sentiment found in Aeschylus, Euripides, Horace, and Spenser 191-92 a thought found in Ovid and Shakespeare 194 cf. *Paradise Lost*, vii, 27 203 **sung** see Job, xxx, 9; Psalms, lxix, 12

Immeasurable strength they might behold
In me; of wisdom nothing more than mean.^o
This with the other should at least have paired;
These two, proportioned ill, drove me transverse.^o

Chor. Tax not divine disposal.^o Wisest men
Have erred, and by bad women^o been deceived;
And shall again, pretend they ne'er so wise.
Deject not, then, so overmuch thyself,
Who hast of sorrow thy full load besides.
Yet, truth to say, I oft have heard men wonder
Why thou shouldst wed Philistian women rather
Than of thine own tribe fairer, or as fair,
At least of thy own nation, and as noble.

Sam. The first I saw at Timna, and she pleased
Me, not my parents, that I sought to wed
The daughter of an infidel: they knew not
That what I motioned^o was of God; I knew
From intimate impulse, and therefore urged
The marriage on, that, by occasion hence,
I might begin Israel's deliverance,
The work to which I was divinely called.
She proving false, the next I took to wife
(O that I never had! fond wish^o too late)
Was in the vale of Sorec,^o Dalila,
That specious^o monster, my accomplished snare.
I thought it lawful from my former act,
And the same end, still watching to oppress
Israel's oppressors: of what now I suffer
She was not the prime cause, but I myself,
Who, vanquished with a peal of words (O weakness!),
Gave up my fort of silence to a woman.

Chor. In seeking just occasion to provoke

207 **mean** average 209 cf. 199 210 In the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (II, xx)
Milton warns the man "in misery" not to "open his lips against the providence of
Heaven, or tax the ways of God and his divine truth." The ease with which "wisest
men" err in matrimonial matters is also a recurring theme—in the prose and below,
759, 1034. 211 **bad women** cf. *Paradise Lost*, x, 837 222 **motioned** proposed (cf.
Paradise Lost, ix, 229) 228 **fond wish** cf. x, 834 229 **Sorec** the Philistine city
nearest Gaza in Palestine 230 **specious** attractive and false

The Philistine, thy country's enemy,
Thou never wast remiss, I bear thee witness;
Yet Israel still serves with all his sons.

Sam. That fault I take not on me, but transfer
On Israel's governors, and heads of tribes,
Who, seeing those great acts which God had done
Singly by me against their conquerors,
Acknowledged not, or not at all considered
Deliverance offered: I, on the other side,
Used no ambition^o to commend my deeds;
The deeds themselves, though mute, spoke loud the
doer,
But they persisted deaf, and would not seem
To count them things worth notice, till at length
Their lords, the Philistines, with gathered powers,

Entered Judea seeking me, who then
 Safe to the rock of Etham° was retired,
 Not flying, but forecasting in what place
 To set upon them, what advantaged best;
 Meanwhile the men of Judah, to prevent
 The harass of their land, beset me round;
 I willingly on some conditions came
 Into their hands, and they as gladly yield me
 To the uncircumcised a welcome prey,
 Bound with two cords; but cords to me were threads
 Touched with the flame: on their whole host I flew
 Unarmed, and with a trivial weapon felled
 Their choicest youth; they only lived who fled.
 Had Judah that day joined, or one whole tribe,
 They had by this possessed the towers of Gath
 And lorded over them whom now they serve;
 But what more oft, in nations grown corrupt,
 And by their vices brought to servitude,
 Than to love bondage more than liberty,
 Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty;
 And to despise, or envy, or suspect,
 Whom God hath of his special favour raised
 As their deliverer; if he aught begin,

247 **ambition** “going around” for public support 253 **Etham** Etam (Judg. xv, 8) a natural stronghold in Judah, perhaps in the neighborhood of Bethlehem

How frequent to desert him, and at last
 To heap ingratitude on worthiest deeds?

Chor. Thy words to my remembrance bring
 How Succoth° and the fort of Penuel°
 Their great deliverer° contemned,
 The matchless Gideon, in pursuit
 Of Madian° and her vanquished kings,
 And how ingrateful Ephraim
 Had dealt with Jephtha,° who by argument,
 Not worse than by his shield and spear,
 Defended Israel from the Ammonite,
 Had not his prowess quelled their pride
 In that sore battle when so many died
 Without reprieve adjudged to death,
 For want of well pronouncing *Shibboleth*.

Sam. Of such examples add me to the roll;
 Me easily indeed mine° may neglect,
 But God’s proposed deliverance not so.

Chor. Just are the ways of God,
 And justifiable to men,°
 Unless there be who think not God at all.
 If any be, they walk obscure;
 For of such doctrine never was there school,
 But the heart of the fool,°
 And no man therein doctor but himself.

Yet more there be who doubt his ways not just,
 As to his own edicts found contradicting,
 Then give the reins to wandering thought,
 Regardless of his glory’s diminution,
 Till, by their own perplexities involved,
 They ravel more, still less resolved,
 But never find self-satisfying solution.

As if they would confine the interminable°

278 **Succoth** “Booths,” a town between Penuel and Sechem **Penuel** east of Jordan; see Judges, viii, 8-9 279 **Their great deliverer** cf. 40 281 **Madian** a spelling of

Midian found in Acts, vii, 29; a nomadic Arabian tribe whose *vanquished kings* were Zebah and Zalmunna 283 **Jephtha** who freed Israel from the Ammonites (see Judg., xi—xii) 291 **mine** my people (cf. *thine*, 1169) 293-94 Cf. i, 26 and Revelation, xv, 3: “just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints.” 298 “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Ps. xiv, 1; liii, 1). 307 **interminable** infinite (God)

And tie him to his own prescript
Who made our laws to bind us, not himself,
And hath full right to exempt
Whom so it pleases him by choice
From national obstruction,^o without taint
Of sin or legal debt,
For with his own laws he can best dispense.
He would not else, who never wanted means,
Nor in respect of the enemy just cause,
To set his people free,
Have prompted this heroic Nazarite,^o
Against his vow of strictest purity,^o
To seek in marriage that fallacious bride,
Unclean, unchaste.

Down, Reason, then; at least, vain reasonings down;
Though Reason here aver
That moral verdict quits her of unclean:
Unchaste was subsequent, her stain, not his.

But see, here comes thy reverend sire,
With careful^o step, locks white as down,
Old Manoa: advise
Forthwith how thou ought'st to receive him.

Sam. Ay me! another inward grief, awaked
With mention of that name, renews the assault.

Man. Brethren and men of Dan, for such ye seem,
Though in this uncouth place, if old respect,
As I suppose, towards your once gloried friend,
My son, now captive, hither hath informed
Your younger feet, while mine, cast back with age
Came lagging after, say if he be here.

Chor. As signal now in low dejected state
As erst in highest, behold him where he lies.

Man. O miserable change! is this the man,
That invincible Samson, far renowned,^o
The dread of Israel's foes, who with a strength
Equivalent to Angels' walked their streets,

312 **obstruction** legal obligation 318 **Nazarite** the name given to Samson in the Bible as one bound by a vow of a peculiar kind to be set apart from others for the service of God (cf. Num. vi, 1—21) 319 against intermarriage 327 **careful** full of care. Old Manoa has been slower, as he explains (336—37), than the Chorus in coming the same distance. 341 **far renowned** cf. i, 507

None offering fight; who, single combatant,
Duelled^o their armies ranked in proud array,
Himself an army, now unequal match
To save himself against a coward armed
At one spear's length. O ever-failing trust
In mortal strength! and, oh, what not in man
Deceivable and vain? Nay, what thing good
Prayed for but often proves our woe, our bane?
I prayed for children, and thought barrenness
In wedlock a reproach; I gained a son,
And such a son as all men hailed me happy:
Who would be now a father in my stead?
O wherefore did God grant me my request,
And as a blessing with such pomp adorned?

Why are his gifts desirable, to tempt
 Our earnest prayers, then given with solemn hand
 As graces,^o draw a scorpion's tail behind?
 For this did the Angel twice descend? for this
 Ordained thy nurture holy, as of a plant;^o
 Select and sacred? glorious for a while,
 The miracle of men, then in an hour
 Ensnared, assaulted, overcome, led bound,
 Thy foes' derision, captive, poor, and blind,
 Into a dungeon thrust, to work with slaves?
 Alas! methinks whom God hath chosen once
 To worthiest deeds,^o if he through frailty err,
 He should not so o'erwhelm, and as a thrall
 Subject him to so foul indignities,
 Be it but for honour's sake of former deeds.

Sam. Appoint not heavenly disposition, Father.^o
 Nothing of all these evils hath befallen me
 But justly; I myself have brought them on;
 Sole author I, sole cause:^o if aught seem vile,
 As vile hath been my folly, who have profaned^o
 The mystery of God, given me under pledge

345 **Duelled** took on single-handed 360 **graces** favors. "If [a son] shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?" (Luke, xi, 12) 362 "For the vineyard of the Lord of hosts is the house of Israel, and the men of Judah his pleasant plant" (Is. v, 7). "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant" (liii, 2). 369 **worthiest deeds** cf. 276 373 The meaning is: Do not judge God. 376 **sole cause** cf. x, 935 377 **profaned** revealed a sacred secret

Of vow, and have betrayed it to a woman,
 A Canaanite,^o my faithless enemy.
 This well I knew, nor was at all surprised,
 But warned by oft experience: did not she
 Of Timna first betray me, and reveal
 The secret wrested from me in her height
 Of nuptial love professed, carrying it straight
 To them who had corrupted her, my spies
 And rivals? In this other was there found
 More faith? who, also in her prime of love,
 Spousal embraces, vitiated with gold,
 Though offered only, by the scent^o conceived,
 Her spurious first-born, treason against me?
 Thrice she assayed, with flattering prayers and sighs
 And amorous reproaches, to win from me
 My capital^o secret, in what part my strength
 Lay stored, in what part summed, that she might know;
 Thrice I deluded her and turned to sport
 Her importunity, each time perceiving
 How openly and with what impudence
 She purposed to betray me, and (which was worse
 Than undissembled hate) with what contempt
 She sought to make me traitor to myself;
 Yet, the fourth time, when, mustering all her wiles,
 With blandished parleys, feminine assaults,
 Tongue-batteries, she surceased not day nor night
 To storm me, overwatched and wearied out,
 At times when men seek most repose and rest,
 I yielded, and unlocked her all my heart,
 Who, with a grain of manhood well resolved,
 Might easily have shook off all her snares,
 But foul effeminacy held me yoked
 Her bond-slave; O indignity,^o O blot
 To honour and religion! servile mind

Rewarded well with servile punishment!
The base degree to which I now am fallen,
These rags, this grinding, is not yet so base

380 **A Canaanite** a special usage for “a Philistine” (referring to the first conquerors of Canaan) 390 **by the scent** of money 394 **capital** meaning both principal and pertaining to the *caput*, head (cf. xii, 383) 411 **O indignity** cf. ix, 154

As was my former servitude, ignoble,
Unmanly, ignominious, infamous,
True slavery; and that blindness worse than this,
That saw not how degenerately I served.

Man. I cannot praise thy marriage-choices, son,^o
Rather approved them not; but thou didst plead
Divine impulsion prompting how thou might'st
Find some occasion to infest our foes.
I state not that; this I am sure, our foes
Found soon occasion thereby to make thee
Their captive, and their triumph; thou the sooner
Temptation found'st, or overpotent charms
To violate the sacred trust of silence
Deposited within thee, which to have kept
Tacit was in thy power, true, and thou bear'st
Enough, and more, the burden of that fault;
Bitterly hast thou paid, and still art paying,
That rigid score. A worse thing yet remains:
This day the Philistines a popular feast
Here celebrate in Gaza and proclaim
Great pomp, and sacrifice, and praises loud
To Dagon, as their god who hath delivered
Thee, Samson, bound and blind, into their hands;^o
Them out of thine, who slew'st them^o many a slain.
So Dagon shall be magnified, and God,
Besides whom is no god, compared with idols,
Disglorified, blasphemed, and had in scorn
By the idolatrous rout amidst their wine;
Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
Samson, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
Could have befallen thee and thy father's house.

Sam. Father, I do acknowledge and confess
That I this honour, I this pomp, have brought
To Dagon, and advanced his praises high

420 Perhaps the most famous understatement in English literature. 436-38 “Then the lords of the Philistines gathered them together for to offer a great sacrifice unto Dagon their god, and to rejoice: for they said, Our god hath delivered Samson our enemy into our hand” (Judg. xvi, 23). 439 The first *Them* is direct object (of *delivered* [437]), the second, a Greek dative of disadvantage.

Among the Heathen round; to God have brought
Dishonour, obloquy, and oped the mouths
Of idolists and atheists; have brought scandal
To Israel, diffidence of God, and doubt
In feeble hearts, propense^o enough before
To waver, or fall off and join with idols:
Which is my chief affliction, shame and sorrow,
The anguish of my soul, that suffers not
Mine eye to harbour sleep or thoughts to rest.
This only hope relieves me, that the strife
With me hath end; all the contest is now
'Twixt God and Dagon; Dagon hath presumed,
Me overthrown,^o to enter lists with God,
His deity comparing and preferring

Before the God of Abraham. He, be sure,
Will not connive,^o or linger, thus provoked,
But will arise, and his great name assert:
Dagon must stoop, and shall ere long receive
Such a discomfit as shall quite despoil him
Of all these boasted trophies won on me,
And with confusion blank his worshippers.

M

an. With cause this hope relieves thee; and these words^o
I as a prophecy receive, for God,
Nothing more certain, will not long defer
To vindicate the glory of his name
Against all competition, nor will long
Endure it doubtful whether God be Lord,
Or Dagon. But for thee what shall be done?
Thou must not in the meanwhile, here forgot,
Lie in this miserable loathsome plight
Neglected. I already have made way
To some Philistian lords, with whom to treat
About thy ransom: well they may by this
Have satisfied their utmost of revenge,
By pains and slaveries, worse than death, inflicted
On thee, who now no more canst do them harm.

Sam. Spare that proposal, Father; spare the trouble
Of that solicitation; let me here,

455 **propense** inclined to 463 **Me overthrown** an ablative absolute—after my
downfall 466 **connive** literally, shut the eyes 472 cf. 460

As I deserve, pay on my punishment,
And expiate, if possible, my crime,
Shameful garrulity. To have revealed
Secrets of men, the secrets of a friend,
How heinous had the fact been, how deserving
Contempt and scorn of all—to be excluded
All friendship, and avoided as a blab,
The mark of fool set on his front!
But I God's counsel have not kept, his holy secret
Presumptuously have published, impiously,
Weakly at least and shamefully—a sin
That Gentiles in their parables condemn
To their abyss and horrid pains confined.^o

Man. Be penitent and for thy fault contrite,
But act not in thy own affliction, son.
Repent the sin, but if the punishment
Thou canst avoid, self-preservation bids:
Or the execution leave to high disposal
And let another hand, not thine, exact
Thy penal forfeit from thyself; perhaps
God will relent and quit thee all his debt;
Who evermore approves and more accepts
(Best pleased with humble and filial submission)
Him who, imploring mercy, sues for life,
Than who, self-rigorous, chooses death as due,
Which argues overjust,^o and self-displeased
For self-offence more than for God offended.
Reject not, then, what offered means who knows
But God hath set before us to return thee
Home to thy country and his sacred house,
Where thou may'st bring thy offerings, to avert
His further ire, with prayers and vows renewed.

Sam. His pardon I implore, but as for life
To what end should I seek it? when in strength

All mortals I excelled, and great in hopes,
With youthful courage and magnanimous thoughts
Of birth from Heaven foretold and high exploits,^o
Full of divine instinct, after some proof

500-01 possibly a reference both to Tantalus and Prometheus, punished revealers of
divine secrets 514 **Which argues overjust** which demand (of death for oneself)
indicates the person to be excessively scrupulous 525 cf. 23

Of acts indeed heroic, far beyond
The sons of Anak,^o famous now and blazed,
Fearless of danger, like a petty god
I walked about, admired of all, and dreaded
On hostile ground, none daring my affront.
Then, swollen with pride, into the snare I fell
Of fair fallacious looks, venereal trains,^o
Softened with pleasure and voluptuous life,
At length to lay my head and hallowed pledge
Of all my strength in the lascivious lap
Of a deceitful concubine, who shore me,^o
Like a tame wether,^o all my precious fleece,
Then turned me out ridiculous, despoiled,
Shaven, and disarmed among my enemies.

Chor. Desire of wine and all delicious drinks,
Which many a famous warrior overturns,
Thou couldst repress; nor did the dancing ruby,^o
Sparkling outpoured, the flavour, or the smell,
Or taste, that cheers the heart of gods and men,^o
Allure thee from the cool crystalline stream.

Sam. Wherever fountain or fresh current flowed
Against the eastern ray, translucent, pure
With touch ethereal of Heaven's fiery rod,
I drank, from the clear milky juice^o allaying
Thirst, and refreshed; nor envied them the grape
Whose heads that turbulent liquor fills with fumes.

Chor. O madness, to think use of strongest wines
And strongest drinks our chief support of health,
When God with these forbidden made choice to rear
His mighty champion, strong above compare,

528 **The sons of Anak** a race of giants 533 **venereal trains** snares of love 535-37
Compare Spenser's Cymochles and Phaedria: She sat beside, laying his head
disarmed /In her loose lap, it softly to sustain, /Where soon he slumbered, fearing
not be harmed, /The whiles with a love lay she thus him sweetly charmed. (*Faerie
Queene*, II, vi, 14) 538 **wether** a castrated ram 543 **the dancing ruby** "Look not
thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it
moveth itself aright" (Prov. xxiii, 31); compare "rubied nectar flows" (*Paradise
Lost*, v, 633) 545 "wine, which cheers gods and men" (Judg. ix. 13, Revised
Standard Version) 550 **clear milky juice** so water was "milky stream" at v, 306

Whose drink was only from the liquid^o brook.

Sam. But what availed this temperance, not complete
Against another object more enticing?
What boots it^o at one gate to make defence,
And at another to let in the foe,
Effeminately vanquished? by which means,
Now blind, disheartened, shamed, dishonoured,
quelled,
To what can I be useful? wherein serve
My nation, and the work from Heaven imposed,
But to sit idle on the household hearth,
A burdensome drone; to visitants a gaze,
Or pitied object; these redundant locks,
Robustious to no purpose, clustering down,

Vain monument of strength, till length of years
 And sedentary numbness craze my limbs
 To a contemptible old age obscure.
 Here rather let me drudge and earn my bread,
 Till vermin, or the draff^o of servile food,
 Consume me, and oft-invoked death
 Hasten the welcome end of all my pains.

Man. Wilt thou then serve the Philistines with that gift
 Which was expressly given thee to annoy them?
 Better at home lie bed-ridden, not only idle,
 Inglorious, unemployed, with age outworn.
 But God, who caused a fountain at thy prayer
 From the dry ground^o to spring, thy thirst to allay
 After the brunt of battle, can as easy
 Cause light again within thy eyes to spring,
 Wherewith to serve him better than thou hast;
 And I persuade me so—why else this strength
 Miraculous yet remaining in those locks?
 His might continues in thee not for naught,
 Nor shall his wondrous gifts^o be frustrate thus.

Sam. All otherwise to me my thoughts portend,
 That these dark orbs no more shall treat with light,
 Nor the other light of life continue long,
 But yield to double darkness nigh at hand;

557 **liquid** transparent; see the prescription for the Nazarite's abstinence in Numbers
 vi, 3—4 560 **What boots it** see "Lycidas," 64. 574 **draff** refuse 582 **dry ground** cf.
 xi, 861 589 **wondrous gifts** cf. xii, 500

So much I feel my genial spirits^o droop,
 My hopes all flat: nature within me seems
 In all her functions weary of herself;
 My race of glory run, and race of shame,
 And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

Man. Believe not these suggestions, which proceed
 From anguish of the mind and humours black^o
 That mingle with thy fancy. I, however,
 Must not omit a father's timely care^o
 To prosecute the means of thy deliverance
 By ransom or how else; meanwhile be calm,
 And healing words^o from these thy friends admit.

Sam. Oh, that torment should not be confined
 To the body's wounds and sores
 With maladies innumerable
 In heart, head, breast, and reins,^o
 But must secret passage find
 To the inmost mind,
 There exercise all his fierce accidents.
 And on her purest spirits^o prey,
 As on entrails, joints, and limbs,
 With answerable pains, but more intense,
 Though void of corporal sense.

My griefs not only pain me
 As a lingering disease,
 But, finding no redress, ferment and rage;
 Nor less than wounds immedicable^o
 Rankle, and fester, and gangrene,
 To black mortification.
 Thoughts, my tormentors, armed with deadly stings,
 Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
 Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
 Dire inflammation, which no cooling herb
 Or med'cinal liquor can assuage,

Nor breath of vernal air° from snowy alp.°
Sleep hath forsook and given me o'er

594 **my genial spirits** my special energies 600 **humours black** melancholy 602
timely care cf. x, 1057 605 **healing words** cf. ix, 290 609 **reins** kidneys 613 **purest**
spirits cf. v, 406 620 **wounds immedicable** *immedicabile vulnus* (Ovid, *Met.* X,
189) 628 **vernal air** cf. iv, 264 **alp** used in Late Latin poetry for any high mountain;
cf. ii, 620

To death's benumbing opium as my only cure;
Thence faintings, swoonings of despair,
And sense of Heaven's desertion.

I was his nursling once and choice delight,
His destined from the womb,
Promised by heavenly message° twice descending.
Under his special eye
Abstemious I grew up and thrived amain;
He led me on to mightiest deeds,
Above the nerve° of mortal arm,
Against the uncircumcised, our enemies;
But now hath cast me off as never known,
And to those cruel enemies,
Whom I by his appointment had provoked,
Left me all helpless, with the irreparable° loss
Of sight, reserved alive to be repeated
The subject of their cruelty or scorn.
Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;
This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
No long petition—speedy death,
The close of all my miseries and the balm.

Chor. Many are the sayings of the wise,
In ancient and in modern books enrolled,
Extolling patience as the truest fortitude,
And to the bearing well of all calamities,
All chances incident to man's frail life,
Consolatories writ
With studied argument, and much persuasion sought,
Lenient of° grief and anxious thought,
But with the afflicted in his pangs their sound
Little prevails, or rather seems a tune
Harsh and of dissonant mood° from his complaint,
Unless he feel within
Some source of consolation from above,
Secret refreshings that repair his strength
And fainting spirits uphold.

God of our fathers, what is Man!°

635 **message** messenger 639 **nerve** Latin *nervus*, sinew. 644 **irreparable loss** cf. ii,
330—31. 659 **Lenient of** alleviating 662 **mood** a musical term, mode 667 "What is
man, that thou art mindful of him" (Ps. viii, 4; cf. Job, vii, 17).

That thou towards him with hand so various,
Or might I say contrarious,
Temper'st thy providence through his short course,
Not evenly, as thou rul'st
The angelic orders, and inferior creatures mute,
Irrational and brute.
Nor do I name of men the common rout,
That, wandering loose about,
Grow up and perish as the summer fly,
Heads° without name, no more remembered;
But such as thou hast solemnly elected,
With gifts and graces eminently adorned,

To some great work, thy glory,
And people's safety, which in part they effect:
Yet toward these, thus dignified, thou oft,
Amidst their height of noon,
Changest thy countenance and thy hand, with no regard
Of highest favours past
From thee on them, or them to thee of service.

Nor only dost degrade them, or remit^o
To life obscured, which were a fair dismissal,
But throw'st them lower than thou didst exalt them high;
Unseemly falls in human eye,
Too grievous for the trespass or omission;
Oft leav'st them to the hostile sword
Of heathen and profane, their carcases
To dogs and fowls a prey,^o or else captived;
Or to the unjust tribunals, under change of times,
And condemnation of the ingrateful multitude.
If these they 'scape, perhaps in poverty
With sickness and disease thou bow'st them down,
Painful diseases and deformed,
In crude^o old age;
Though not disordinate,^o yet causeless suffering
The punishment of dissolute days, in fine,
Just or unjust alike seem miserable,
For oft alike both come to evil end.

So deal not with this once thy glorious champion,
The image of thy strength, and mighty minister.

677 **Heads** people (a Latinism) 687 **remit** send back 694 **To dogs and fowls a prey**
Iliad, I, 4-5 700 **crude** possibly, premature, as in "Lycidas," 3. 701 **disordinate**
intemperate

What do I beg? how hast thou dealt already?
Behold him in this state calamitous, and turn
His labours, for thou canst, to peaceful end.

But who is this, what thing of sea or land?
Female of sex it seems,
That, so bedecked, ornate, and gay,
Comes this way sailing,
Like a stately ship
Of Tarsus,^o bound for the isles
Of Javan^o or Gadire^o
With all her bravery^o on and tackle trim,
Sails filled and streamers waving,
Courtied by all the winds that hold them play;^o
An amber scent^o of odorous perfume
Her harbinger, a damsel train behind;
Some rich Philistian matron she may seem,
And now, at nearer view, no other certain
Than Dalila, thy wife.

Sam. My wife, my traitress, let her not come
near me.

Chor. Yet on she moves; now stands and eyes thee
fixed,
About to have spoke; but now, with head declined,
Like a fair flower surcharged with dew, she weeps,
And words addressed seem into tears dissolved,
Wetting the borders of her silken veil;
But now again she makes address to speak.

Dal. With doubtful feet and wavering resolution
I came, still dreading thy displeasure, Samson,
Which to have merited, without excuse,
I cannot but acknowledge; yet, if tears

May expiate (though the fact more evil drew

715 **Tarsus** equated with Tarshish, the ships of which are so often mentioned in the Old Testament as symbols of pride and affluence (e.g., 1 Kings, x, 22) as to suggest any distant place, whether the port on the Guadalquivir in Spain or the thriving capital of Cilicia 716 **Javan** the son of Japhet, identified with Ion, ancestor of the Ionians or Greeks, so that *the isles* (715) are Greece **Gadire** Cádiz in Spain 717 **bravery** finery 719 compare Gratiano's speech, which here has "Hugg'd and embraced by the strumpet wind!" (*Merchant of Venice*, II, vi, 16) 720 **amber scent** derived probably from the ambergris of the whale rather than from the equally fragrant amber tree

In the perverse event than I foresaw),
My penance^o hath not slackened, though my pardon
No way assured. But conjugal affection,
Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt,
Hath led me on, desirous to behold
Once more thy face, and know of thy estate,
If aught in my ability may serve
To lighten what thou suffer'st and appease
Thy mind with what amends is in my power,
Though late, yet in some part to recompense
My rash but more unfortunate misdeed.

Sam. Out, out, hyaena;^o these are thy wonted arts,
And arts of every woman false like thee,
To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
Then, as repentant, to submit, beseech,
And reconciliation move with feigned remorse,
Confess, and promise wonders in her change,
Not truly penitent, but chief to try
Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,
His virtue or weakness which way to assail;
Then with more cautious and instructed skill
Again transgresses, and again submits;
That wisest and best men, full oft beguiled,
With goodness principled not to reject
The penitent but ever to forgive,
Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
Entangled with a poisonous bosom snake,
If not by quick destruction soon cut off,
As I by thee, to ages an example.

Dal. Yet hear me, Samson; not that I endeavour
To lessen or extenuate my offence,
But that, on the other side, if it be weighed
By itself, with aggravations not surcharged,
Or else with just allowance counterpoised,
I may, if possible, thy pardon find
The easier towards me, or thy hatred less.
First granting, as I do, it was a weakness

738 **penance** penitence 748 Pliny reported of the *hyaena* that "he will feign man's speech, and, coming to the shepherds' cottages, will call one of them forth whose name he hath learned, and when he hath him without, all to worry and tear him to pieces."

In me, but incident to all our sex,
Curiosity, inquisitive, importune
Of secrets, then with like infirmity
To publish them, both common female faults;
Was it not weakness also to make known
For importunity, that is for naught,
Wherein consisted all thy strength and safety?
To what I did thou show'dst me first the way.
But I to enemies revealed, and should not.

Nor shouldst thou have trusted that to woman's frailty:
 Ere I to thee, thou to thyself wast cruel.
 Let weakness, then, with weakness come to parle,
 So near related, or the same of kind;^o
 Thine forgive mine, that men may censure thine
 The gentler, if severely thou exact not
 More strength from me than in thyself was found.
 And what if love, which thou interpret'st hate,
 The jealousy of love, powerful of sway
 In human hearts, nor less in mine towards thee,
 Caused what I did? I saw thee mutable
 Of fancy;^o feared lest one day thou wouldst leave me
 As her at Timna; sought by all means, therefore,
 How to endear, and hold thee to me firmest:
 No better way I saw than by importuning
 To learn thy secrets, get into my power
 Thy key of strength and safety: thou wilt say,
 'Why, then, revealed?' I was assured by those
 Who tempted me that nothing was designed
 Against thee but safe custody and hold:^o
 That made for me, I knew that liberty
 Would draw thee forth to perilous enterprises,
 While I at home sat full of cares and fears,
 Wailing thy absence in my widowed bed;
 Here I should still enjoy thee, day and night,
 Mine and love's prisoner, not the Philistines',
 Whole to myself, unhazarded abroad,
 Fearless at home of partners in my love.

786 **kind** nature 793-94 **mutable/ Of fancy** fancy-free 800—02 A lie: Dalila knew the Philistines' purpose was to "bind him to afflict him" (Judg. xvi, 5). Nor does Dalila care to mention the "Philistian gold," 831.

These reasons in Love's law have passed for good,
 Though fond and reasonless to some perhaps;
 And love hath oft, well meaning, wrought much woe,
 Yet always pity or pardon hath obtained.
 Be not unlike all others, not austere
 As thou art strong, inflexible as steel.
 If thou in strength all mortals dost exceed,^o
 In uncompassionate anger do not so.

Sam. How cunningly the sorceress displays
 Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine!
 That malice, not repentance, brought thee hither
 By this appears: I gave, thou say'st, the example,
 I led the way—bitter reproach, but true;
 I to myself was false ere thou to me.
 Such pardon, therefore, as I give my folly
 Take to thy wicked deed; which^o when thou seest
 Impartial, self-severe, inexorable,
 Thou wilt renounce thy seeking, and much rather
 Confess it feigned: weakness is thy excuse,
 And I believe it; weakness to resist
 Philistian gold. If weakness may excuse,
 What murderer, what traitor, parricide,
 Incestuous, sacrilegious, but may plead it?
 All wickedness is weakness; that plea, therefore,
 With God or man will gain thee no remission.
 But love constrained thee; call it furious rage^o
 To satisfy thy lust: Love seeks to have love;
 My love how couldst thou hope, who took'st the way
 To raise in me inextinguishable hate,
 Knowing, as needs I must, by thee betrayed?

In vain thou striv'st to cover shame with shame,
Or by evasions thy crime uncover'st more.

Dal. Since thou determin'st weakness for no plea^o
In man or woman, though to thy own condemning,
Hear what assaults I had, what snares besides,
What sieges girt me round, ere I consented,
Which might have awed the best-resolved of men,
The constantest, to have yielded without blame.
It was not gold, as to my charge thou lay'st,

817 cf. 522-23 826 **which** The antecedent is "pardon," 825. 836 **furious rage** cf. viii, 244 843 cf. 834

That wrought with me: thou know'st the magistrates
And princes of my country came in person,
Solicited, commanded, threatened, urged,
Adjured by all the bonds of civil duty
And of religion, pressed how just it was,
How honourable, how glorious to entrap
A common enemy, who had destroyed
Such numbers of our nation; and the priest
Was not behind, but ever at my ear,
Preaching how meritorious with the gods
It would be to ensnare an irreligious
Dishonourer of Dagon:° what had I
To oppose against such powerful arguments?
Only my love of thee held long debate,°
And combated in silence all these reasons
With hard contest. At length, that grounded maxim,
So rife and celebrated in the mouths
Of wisest men, that to the public good
Private respects° must yield, with grave authority
Took full possession of me and prevailed;
Virtue, as I thought, truth, duty, so enjoining.

Sam. I thought where all thy circling wiles would end:
In feigned religion, smooth hypocrisy;
But, had thy love, still odiously pretended,
Been, as it ought, sincere, it would have taught thee
Far other reasonings, brought forth other deeds.
I before all the daughters of my tribe
And of my nation chose thee from among
My enemies, loved thee, as too well thou knew'st,
Too well, unbosomed all my secrets to thee,
Not out of levity, but overpowered
By thy request, who could deny thee nothing,
Yet now am judged an enemy. Why, then,
Didst thou at first receive me for thy husband?
Then, as since then, thy country's foe professed:
Being once a wife, for me thou wast to leave

857-61 As F. T. Prince remarks, "The Old Testament makes no mention of priestly influence on Dalila; Milton is colouring the story with his own anti-clerical convictions." 863 **long debate** cf. ii, 390; ix, 87 868 **respects** considerations or interests

Parents and country; nor was I their subject,
Nor under their protection, but my own;
Thou mine, not theirs: if aught against my life
Thy country sought of thee, it sought unjustly,
Against the law of nature, law of nations;°
No more thy country, but an impious crew
Of men conspiring to uphold their state
By worse than hostile deeds, violating the ends
For which our country is a name so dear,

Not therefore to be obeyed. But zeal moved thee;
To please thy gods thou didst it; gods unable
To acquit themselves and prosecute their foes
But by ungodly deeds, the contradiction
Of their own deity, gods cannot be:
Less therefore to be pleased, obeyed, or feared.
These false pretexts and varnished colours failing,
Bare in thy guilt, how foul must thou appear?

Dal. In argument with men a woman ever
Goes by the worse, whatever be her cause.

Sam. For want of words, no doubt, or lack of breath;
Witness when I was worried with thy peals.

Dal. I was a fool, too rash, and quite mistaken
In what I thought would have succeeded best.
Let me obtain forgiveness of thee, Samson;
Afford me place to show what recompense^o
Towards thee I intend for what I have misdone,
Misguided; only what remains past cure
Bear not too sensibly,^o nor still insist
To afflict thyself in vain: though sight be lost,
Life yet hath many solaces, enjoyed
Where other senses want not their delights,
At home, in leisure and domestic ease,
Exempt from many a care and chance to which
Eyesight exposes, daily, men abroad.
I to the lords will intercede, not doubting
Their favourable ear, that I may fetch thee

890 Here Milton translates the title of a book he had used both for *Areopagitica* and the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce: De Jure Naturali et Gentium*, by the learned John Selden (1584-1654). 910 Esau “found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears” (Heb. xii, 17). 913 **sensibly** acutely

From forth this loathsome prison-house, to abide
With me, where my redoubled love and care,
With nursing diligence, to me glad office,
May ever tend about thee to old age
With all things grateful cheered, and so supplied
That what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss.

Sam. No, no, of my condition take no care;
It fits not; thou and I long since are twain;
Nor think me so unwary or accursed
To bring my feet again into the snare
Where once I have been caught; I know thy trains,^o
Though dearly to my cost, thy gins,^o and toils;
Thy fair enchanted cup and warbling charms
No more on me have power—their force is nulled;
So much of adder’s wisdom I have learnt
To fence my ear against thy sorceries.^o
If in my flower of youth and strength, when all men
Loved, honoured, feared me, thou alone could hate me,
Thy husband, slight me, sell me, and forgo me,
How wouldst thou use me now, blind, and thereby
Deceivable, in most things as a child
Helpless, thence easily contemned and scorned,
And last neglected? How wouldst thou insult,
When I must live uxorious to thy will
In perfect thralldom, how again betray me,
Bearing my words and doings to the lords
To gloss upon, and, censuring, frown or smile?
This jail I count the house of liberty
To thine, whose doors my feet shall never enter.

Dal. Let me approach at least, and touch thy hand.

Sam. Not for thy life, lest fierce remembrance wake
My sudden rage to tear thee joint by joint.
At distance I forgive thee; go with that;
Bewail thy falsehood, and the pious works
It hath brought forth to make thee memorable
Among illustrious women, faithful wives;

932 **trains** cf. 533 933 **gins** traps (short for engines) 936-37 “Their poison is like the
poison of a serpent: they are like the deaf adder that stoppeth her ear; Which will not
hearken to the voice of charmers, charming never so wisely” (Ps. lviii, 4-5).

Cherish thy hastened widowhood with the gold
Of matrimonial treason: so farewell.

Dal. I see thou art implacable, more deaf
To prayers than winds and seas; yet winds to seas
Are reconciled at length, and sea to shore:
Thy anger, unappeasable, still rages,
Eternal tempest never to be calmed.
Why do I humble thus myself, and, suing
For peace, reap nothing but repulse and hate?
Bid go with evil omen, and the brand
Of infamy upon my name denounced?
To mix with thy concerns I desist
Henceforth, nor too much disapprove my own.
Fame, if not double-faced, is double-mouthed,
And with contrary blast proclaims most deeds;
On both his wings, one black, the other white,
Bears greatest names in his wild airy flight:
My name, perhaps, among the circumcised
In Dan, in Judah, and the bordering tribes,
To all posterity may stand defamed,
With malediction mentioned, and the blot
Of falsehood most unconjugal traduced.
But in my country, where I most desire,
In Ecron, Gaza, Asdod, and in Gath,^o
I shall be named among the famous
Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
Living and dead recorded, who, to save
Her country from a fierce destroyer, chose
Above the faith of wedlock-bands, my tomb
With odours^o visited and annual flowers.
Not less renowned than in Mount Ephraim^o
Jael, who, with inhospitable guile,^o
Smote Sisera sleeping, through the temples nailed.
Nor shall I count it heinous to enjoy

981 Dalila names four of the five (omitting Ascalon) chief cities of the Philistines to
illustrate how widespread her fame will be the first two being respectively
northernmost and southernmost. 987 **odours** incense 988 **Mount Ephraim** in the
hilly district of central Palestine inhabited by the tribe of Ephraim that had been
“ingrateful” (282) to Jephtha 989 ff. see Judges, iv, 21

The public marks of honour and reward
Conferred upon me for the piety
Which to my country I was judged to have shown.
At this whoever envies or repines,
I leave him to his lot, and like my own.

Chor. She's gone, a manifest serpent by her sting
Discovered in the end, till now concealed.

Sam. So let her go; God sent her to debase me,
And aggravate my folly, who committed
To such a viper his most sacred trust^o
Of secrecy, my safety, and my life.

C

hor. Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,^o
After offence returning, to regain
Love once possessed, nor can be easily
Repulsed, without much inward passion felt,
And secret sting of amorous remorse.

Sam. Love-quarrels oft in pleasing concord end;^o
Not wedlock-treachery endangering life.

Chor. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
Strength, comeliness of shape, or amplest merit,
That woman's love can win, or long inherit;
But what it is, hard is to say,
Harder to hit

(Which way soever men refer it),
Much like thy riddle, Samson, in one day
Or seven though one should musing sit;

If any of these, or all, the Timnian bride
Had not so soon preferred
Thy paranymp^o, worthless to thee compared,
Successor in thy bed,
Nor both so loosely disallied
Their nuptials, nor this last so treacherously
Had shorn the fatal harvest of thy head.
Is it for that^o such outward ornament
Was lavished on their sex, that inward gifts
Were left for haste unfinished, judgement scant,
Capacity not raised to apprehend

1001 **sacred trust** cf. 428 1003 compare beseeching Eve, x, 910 ff 1008 a
translation of a famous line: *Amantium irae amoris integratio est* (Terence, *Andria*,
III, iii, 23) 1020 **paranymp** best man 1025 **for that** because

Or value what is best
In choice, but ofttest to affect the wrong?
Or was too much of self-love mixed,
Of constancy no root infixed,
That either they love nothing, or not long?
Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best,^o
Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
Soft, modest, meek, demure,
Once joined, the contrary she proves—a thorn
Intestine,^o far within defensive arms
A cleaving mischief,^o in his way to virtue
Adverse and turbulent; or by her charms
Draws him awry, enslaved
With dotage, and his sense depraved
To folly and shameful deeds, which ruins ends.
What pilot so expert but needs must wreck,
Embarked with such a steers-mate at the helm?

Favoured of Heaven^o who finds
One virtuous, rarely found,
That in domestic good combines:
Happy that house! his way to peace is smooth:
But virtue which breaks through all opposition,
And all temptation can remove,
Most shines and most is acceptable above.

Therefore God's universal law
Gave to the man despotic power
Over his female in due awe,
Nor from that right to part an hour,
Smile she or lower:
So shall he least confusion draw
On his whole life, not swayed
By female usurpation, nor dismayed.

But had we best retire? I see a storm.
Sam. Fair days have oft contracted wind and rain.
Chor. But this another kind of tempest brings.
Sam. Be less abstruse; my riddling days are past.

1034 cf. 210, 759, 867 1037-38 “a thorn in the flesh” (2 Cor. xii, 7) 1039 **A cleaving mischief** taken by the eighteenth-century commentator Meadowcourt as referring “to the poisoned shirt sent to Hercules by his wife Deianira”; cf. ii, 542-43 1046 **Favoured of Heaven** cf. i, 30

Chor. Look now for no enchanting voice, nor fear
The bait of honeyed words; a rougher tongue
Draws hitherward; I know him by his stride,
The giant Harapha^o of Gath, his look
Haughty, as is his pile^o high-built and proud.
Comes he in peace? what wind hath blown him hither
I less conjecture than when first I saw
The sumptuous Dalila floating this way:
His habit carries peace, his brow defiance.

Sam. Or peace or not, alike to me he comes.

Chor. His fraught^o we soon shall know: he now arrives.

Har. I come not, Samson, to condole thy chance,
As these perhaps, yet wish it had not been,
Though for no friendly intent. I am of Gath;
Men call me Harapha, of stock renowned
As Og, or Anak, and the Emims old^o
That Kiriathaim^o held; thou know'st me now,
If thou at all art known.^o Much I have heard
Of thy prodigious might and feats performed,
Incredible to me, in this displeased,
That I was never present on the place
Of those encounters, where we might have tried
Each other's force in camp or listed field;
And now am come to see of whom such noise
Hath walked about, and each limb to survey,
If thy appearance answer loud report.

Sam. The way to know were not to see, but taste.

Har. Dost thou already single me? I thought
Gyves and the mill had tamed thee. Oh, that fortune
Had brought me to the field where thou art famed
To have wrought such wonders with an ass's jaw;
I should have forced thee soon with^o other arms,
Or left thy carcase where the ass lay thrown;
So had the glory of prowess been recovered

1068 **Harapha** a name meaning *the giant* (the marginal note in the Anglican version has Rapha for giant in 2 Sam. xxi, 16; the Vulgate—Regum, 2, xxi, 16—Arapha)
1069 **his pile** his huge body 1075 **fraught** freight or message 1080 giants 1081 **Kiriathaim** a town east of the Jordan; see Genesis, xiv, 5 1081-82 cf. iv, 830 1096 **with** the emendation *wish* is popular

To Palestine, won by a Philistine
From the unforeskinned race, of whom thou bear'st
The highest name for valiant acts; that honour,
Certain to have won by mortal duel from thee,
I lose, prevented by thy eyes put out.^o

Sam. Boast not of what thou wouldst have done,
but do
What then thou wouldst; thou seest it in thy hand.

Har. To combat with a blind man I disdain,
And thou hast need much washing to be touched.

Sam. Such usage as your honourable lords
Afford me, assassinated^o and betrayed,
Who durst not with their whole united powers

In fight withstand me single and unarmed,
 Nor in the house with chamber ambushes
 Close-banded durst attack me, no, not sleeping,
 Till they had hired a woman with their gold,
 Breaking her marriage faith, to circumvent me.
 Therefore, without feigned shifts, let be assigned
 Some narrow place enclosed, where sight may give thee,
 Or rather flight, no great advantage on me;
 Then put on all thy gorgeous arms, thy helmet
 And brigandine^o of brass, thy broad habergeon,^o
 Vant-brass^o and greaves^o and gauntlet; add thy spear,
 A weaver's beam, and seven-times-folded shield:^o
 I only with an oaken staff will meet thee,
 And raise such outcries on thy clattered iron,
 Which long shall not withhold me from thy head,
 That in a little time, while breath remains thee,
 Thou oft shalt wish thyself at Gath, to boast
 Again in safety what thou wouldst have done
 To Samson, but shalt never see Gath more.

Har. Thou durst not thus disparage glorious arms
 Which greatest heroes have in battle worn,
 Their ornament and safety, had not spells

1103 **thy eyes put out** cf. 33 1109 **assassinated** attacked by treachery 1120
brigandine metal-plated body armor **habergeon** a coat of mail 1121 **Vant-brass**
 armor for the forearm **greaves** armor for the lower leg 1121-22 A deliberate
 reminiscence (as the armor was above) of the equipage of Goliath: "And the staff of
 his spear was like a weaver's beam" (1 Sam. xvii, 7).

And black enchantments, some magician's art,
 Armed thee or charmed thee strong, which thou
 from Heaven
 Feign'dst at thy birth was given thee in thy hair,
 Where strength can least abide, though all thy hairs
 Were bristles ranged like those that ridge the back
 Of chafed wild boars or ruffled porcupines.^o

Sam. I know no spells, use no forbidden arts;^o
 My trust is in the living God who gave me,
 At my nativity, this strength, diffused
 No less through all my sinews, joints, and bones,
 Than thine, while I preserved these locks unshorn,
 The pledge of my unviolated vow.
 For proof hereof, if Dagon be thy god,
 Go to his temple, invoke his aid
 With solemnest devotion, spread before him
 How highly it concerns his glory now
 To frustrate and dissolve these magic spells,
 Which I to be the power of Israel's God
 Avow, and challenge Dagon to the test,
 Offering to combat thee, his champion bold,
 With the utmost of his godhead seconded:
 Then thou shalt see, or rather to thy sorrow
 Soon feel, whose God is strongest, thine or mine.

Har. Presume not on thy God; whate'er he be,
 Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
 Quite from his people, and delivered up
 Into thy enemies' hand; permitted them
 To put out both thine eyes, and fettered send thee
 Into the common prison, there to grind,
 Among the slaves and asses, thy comrades,
 As good for nothing else, no better service
 With those thy boisterous locks, no worthy match
 For valour to assail, nor by the sword

Of noble warrior, so to stain his honour,
But by the barber's razor best subdued.

Sam. All these indignities, for such they are
From thine, these evils I deserve and more,

1137-38 More famous is "each particular hair to stand an end/ Like quills upon the
fretful porpentine" (*Hamlet*, I, v, 19-20). 1139 So jousts were supposed to swear,
in the Middle Ages.

Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon,
Whose ear is ever open, and his eye
Gracious to readmit the suppliant;
In confidence whereof I once again
Defy thee to the trial of mortal fight,
By combat to decide whose god is God,
Thine, or whom I with Israel's sons adore.

Har. Fair honour that thou dost thy God, in trusting
He will accept thee to defend his cause,
A murderer, a revolter, and a robber.

Sam. Tongue-doughty giant, how dost thou prove me these?

Har. Is not thy nation subject to our lords?
Their magistrates confessed it when they took thee
As a league-breaker and delivered bound
Into our hands, for hadst thou not committed
Notorious murder on those thirty men
At Ascalon, who never did thee harm,
Then, like a robber, stripp'dst them of their robes?
The Philistines, when thou hadst broke the league,
Went up with armed powers thee only seeking,
To others did no violence nor spoil.

Sam. Among the daughters of the Philistines
I chose a wife, which argued me no foe,
And in your city held my nuptial feast;
But your ill-meaning politician lords,
Under pretence of bridal friends and guests,
Appointed to await me thirty spies,
Who, threatening cruel death, constrained the bride
To wring from me, and tell to them, my secret,
That solved the riddle which I had proposed.
When I perceived all set on enmity,
As on my enemies, where ever chanced,
I used hostility, and took their spoil
To pay my underminers in their coin.
My nation was subjected to your lords.
It was the force of conquest; force with force
Is well ejected when the conquered can.
But I, a private person, whom my country
As a league-breaker gave up bound, presumed°

1209 cf. 1184

Single rebellion. and did hostile acts.
I was no private, but a person raised,
With strength sufficient and command from Heaven,
To free my country; if their servile minds
Me, their deliverer sent, would not receive,
But to their masters gave me up for nought,
The unworthier they; whence to this day they serve.
I was to do my part from Heaven assigned,
And had performed it if my known offence
Had not disabled me, not all your force.
These shifts refuted, answer thy appellant,°
Though by his blindness maimed for high attempts,

Who now defies thee thrice to single fight,
As a petty enterprise of small enforce.

Har. With thee, a man condemned, a slave enrolled,
Due by the law to capital punishment?
To fight with thee no man of arms will deign.

Sam. Cam'st thou for this, vain boaster, to survey me,
To descant on my strength, and give thy verdict?
Come nearer; part not hence so slight informed;
But take good heed my hand survey not thee.

Har. O Baal-zebub! can my ears unused
Hear these dishonours, and not render death?

Sam. No man withholds thee; nothing from thy hand
Fear I incurable; bring up thy van;
My heels are fettered, but my fist is free.

Har. This insolence other kind of answer fits.

Sam. Go, baffled coward, lest I run upon thee,
Though in these chains, bulk without spirit vast,
And with one buffet lay thy structure low,
Or swing thee in the air, then dash thee down
To the hazard of thy brains and shattered sides.

Har. By Astaroth,^o ere long thou shalt lament
These braveries, in irons loaden on thee.

Chor. His giantship is gone somewhat crestfallen,
Stalking with less unconscionable strides
And lower looks, but in a sultry chafe.

Sam. I dread him not, nor all his giant-brood,

1220 **appellant** challenger (who "calls out" the defendant) 1242 **Astaroth** Syro-
Phoenician goddess identified variously with Aphrodite, Selene, and Artemis

Though fame divulge him father of five sons,
All of gigantic size, Goliah chief.

Chor. He will directly to the lords, I fear,
And with malicious counsel stir them up
Some way or other yet further to afflict thee.

Sam. He must allege some cause, and offered fight
Will not dare mention, lest a question rise
Whether he durst accept the offer or not,
And that he durst not plain enough appeared.
Much more affliction than already felt
They cannot well impose, nor I sustain,
If they intend advantage of my labours,
The work of many hands, which earns my keeping,
With no small profit daily to my owners.
But come what will; my deadliest foe will prove
My speediest friend, by death to rid me hence;
The worst that he can give, to me the best.
Yet so it may fall out; because their end
Is hate, not help to me, it may with mine
Draw their own ruin who attempt the deed.

Chor. Oh, how comely it is, and how reviving
To the spirits of just men long opprest,
When God into the hands of their deliverer
Puts invincible might,
To quell the mighty of the earth, the oppressor,
The brute and boisterous force of violent men,
Hardy and industrious to support
Tyrannic power, but raging to pursue
The righteous, and all such as honour Truth!
He all their ammunition
And feats of war defeats^o
With plain heroic magnitude of mind
And celestial vigour armed;

Their armouries and magazines contemns,
Renders them useless, while
With winged expedition
Swift as the lightning glance he executes
His errand on the wicked, who, surprised,
Lose their defence, distracted and amazed.

But patience is more oft the exercise

1278 a jingle like i, 642

Of saints, the trial of their fortitude,
Making them each his own deliverer,
And victor over all
That tyranny or fortune can inflict.
Either of these is in thy lot,
Samson, with might endued
Above the sons of men; but sight bereaved
May chance to number thee with those
Whom patience finally must crown.

This Idol's day hath been to thee no day of rest,
Labouring thy mind
More than the working day thy hands;
And yet, perhaps, more trouble is behind.
For I descry this way
Some other tending; in his hand
A sceptre or quaint staff he bears,
Comes on amain, speed in his look.
By his habit I discern him now
A public officer, and now at hand.
His message will be short and voluble.°

Off. Hebrews, the prisoner Samson here I seek.

Chor. His manacles remark° him; there he sits.

Off. Samson, to thee our lords thus bid me say:
This day to Dagon is a solemn feast,°
With sacrifices, triumph,° pomp, and games;
Thy strength they know surpassing human rate,
And now some public proof thereof require
To honour this great feast, and great assembly;
Rise, therefore, with all speed, and come along,
Where I will see thee heartened and fresh clad,
To appear as fits before the illustrious lords.

Sam. Thou know'st I am an Hebrew, therefore tell
them

Our law forbids at their religious rites°
My presence; for that cause I cannot come.

Off. This answer, be assured, will not content them.

Sam. Have they not sword-players,° and every sort

1307 **voluble** rolled out fast 1309 **remark** distinguish 1311 **a solemn feast** cf. 12 (a biblical phrase) 1312 **triumph** festivity or public exhibition, as at xi, 723 1320 **religious rites** cf. xii, 231 1323 **sword-players** fencers

Of gymnastic artists,° wrestlers, riders, runners,
Jugglers and dancers, antics, mummers, mimics,°
But they must pick me out, with shackles tired,
And overlaboured at their public mill,
To make them sport with blind activity?
Do they not seek occasion of new quarrels,
On my refusal, to distress me more,
Or make a game of my calamities?
Return the way thou cam'st; I will not come.

Off. Regard thyself; this will offend them highly.

Sam. Myself? my conscience, and internal peace.
Can they think me so broken, so debased

With corporal servitude, that my mind ever
Will condescend to such absurd commands?
Although their drudge, to be their fool or jester,
And, in my midst of sorrow and heart-grief,
To show them feats, and play before their god—
The worst of all indignities, yet on me
Joined with extreme contempt? I will not come.

Off. My message was imposed on me with speed,
Brooks no delay: is this thy resolution?

Sam. So take it with what speed thy message needs.

Off. I am sorry what this stoutness will produce.°

Sam. Perhaps thou shalt have cause to sorrow indeed.

Chor. Consider, Samson; matters now are strained
Up to the height, whether to hold or break.
He's gone, and who knows how he may report
Thy words by adding fuel to the flame?
Expect another message, more imperious,
More lordly thundering than thou well wilt bear.

Sam. Shall I abuse this consecrated gift
Of strength, again returning with my hair
After my great transgression, so requite
Favour renewed, and add a greater sin
By prostituting holy things to idols,
A Nazarite, in place abominable,
Vaunting my strength in honour to their Dagon?
Besides, how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,

1324 **gymnic artists** gymnasts 1325 **mimics** actors (misprinted *mimirs*—as if
mimers?—in the first ed.) 1346 I am sorry to think what this stubbornness will lead
to.

What act more execrably unclean, profane?

Chor. Yet with this strength thou serv'st the Philistines,
Idolatrous, uncircumcised, unclean.

Sam. Not in their idol-worship, but by labour
Honest and lawful to deserve my food
Of those who have me in their civil power.

Chor. Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not.

Sam. Where outward force constrains, the
sentence holds;
But who constrains me to the temple of Dagon,
Not dragging? the Philistian lords command.
Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
I do it freely, venturing to displease
God for the fear of man, and man prefer,
Set God behind, which, in his jealousy,
Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.
Yet that he may dispense with me or thee,
Present in temples at idolatrous rites
For some important cause, thou need'st not doubt.

Chor. How thou wilt here come off surmounts my reach.

Sam. Be of good courage; I begin to feel
Some rousing motions in me, which dispose
To something extraordinary my thoughts.
I with this messenger will go along,
Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour
Our Law, or stain my vow of Nazarite.
If there be aught of presage in the mind,
This day will be remarkable in my life
By some great act, or of my days the last.

Chor. In time thou hast resolved: the man returns.

Off. Samson, this second message from our lords
To thee I am bid say. Art thou our slave,

Our captive, at the public mill^o our drudge,
And dar'st thou, at our sending and command,
Dispute thy coming? come without delay,
Or we shall find such engines to assail
And hamper thee as thou shalt come of force
Though thou wert firmlier fastened than a rock.

1393 **at the public mill** cf. 1327 (and back to 41)

Sam. I could be well content to try their art,
Which to no few of them would prove pernicious.
Yet, knowing their advantages too many,
Because they shall not trail me through their streets
Like a wild beast, I am content to go.
Masters' commands come with a power resistless
To such as owe them absolute subjection,
And for a life who will not change his purpose?
(So mutable are all the ways of men^o)
Yet this be sure, in nothing to comply
Scandalous or forbidden in our Law.

Off. I praise thy resolution; doff these links:
By this compliance thou wilt win the lords
To favour, and perhaps to set thee free.

Sam. Brethren, farewell; your company along
I will not wish, lest it perhaps offend them
To see me girt with friends, and how the sight
Of me, as of a common enemy,^o
So dreaded once, may now exasperate them
I know not. Lords are lordliest in their wine,
And the well-feasted priest then soonest fired
With zeal, if aught religion seem concerned;
No less the people, on their holy-days,
Impetuous, insolent, unquenchable;
Happen what may, of me expect to hear
Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy
Our God, our Law, my nation, or myself;
The last of me or no, I cannot warrant.

Chor. Go, and the Holy One
Of Israel be thy guide
To what may serve his glory best, and spread his name
Great among the Heathen round;^o
Send thee the Angel of thy birth, to stand
Fast by thy side, who from thy father's field
Rode up in flames after his message told
Of thy conception, and be now a shield
Of fire; that Spirit that first rushed on thee
In the camp of Dan,
Be efficacious in thee now at need.

1407 **the ways of men** cf. iii, 46 1416 **a common enemy** cf. 856 1430 **among the
Heathen round** cf. 451 (also x, 579)

For never was from Heaven imparted
Measure of strength so great to mortal seed
As in thy wondrous actions hath been seen.
But wherefore comes old Manoa in such haste
With youthful steps? much livelier than erewhile
He seems: supposing here to find his son,
Or of him bringing to us some glad news?

Man. Peace with you, brethren; my inducement hither
Was not at present here to find my son,
By order of the lords new parted hence
To come and play before them at their feast.
I heard all as I came; the city rings,

And numbers thither flock: I had no will,
Lest I should see him forced to things unseemly.
But that which moved my coming now was chiefly
To give ye part with me what hope I have
With good success to work his liberty.

Chor. That hope would much rejoice us to partake
With thee; say, reverend sire;° we thirst to hear.

Man. I have attempted,° one by one, the lords,
Either at home, or through the high street passing,
With supplication prone and father's tears,
To accept of ransom for my son, their prisoner;
Some much averse I found, and wondrous harsh,
Contemptuous, proud, set on revenge and spite;
That part most revered Dagon and his priests:
Others more moderate seeming, but their aim
Private reward, for which both God and State
They easily would set to sale; a third
More generous far and civil, who confessed
They had enough revenged, having reduced
Their foe to misery beneath their fears;
The rest was magnanimity to remit,
If some convenient ransom were proposed.
What noise or shout was that? it tore the sky.°

Chor. Doubtless the people shouting to behold
Their once great dread, captive and blind before them,
Or at some proof of strength before them shown.

Man. His ransom, if my whole inheritance
May compass it, shall willingly be paid

1456 **reverend sire** cf. 326; ix, 719; "Lycidas," 103 1457 **attempted** approached
1472 **it tore the sky** cf. i, 542

And numbered down: much rather I shall choose
To live the poorest in my tribe than richest,
And he in that calamitous prison left.
No, I am fixed not to part hence without him.
For his redemption all my patrimony,
If need be, I am ready to forgo
And quit: not wanting him, I shall want nothing.

Chor. Fathers are wont to lay up for their sons,
Thou for thy son art bent to lay out all;
Sons wont to nurse their parents in old age,°
Thou in old age car'st how to nurse thy son,
Made older than thy age through eyesight lost.

Man. It shall be my delight to tend his eyes,
And view him sitting in the house, ennobled
With all those high exploits° by him achieved,
And on his shoulders waving down those locks
That of a nation armed the strength contained;
And I persuade me God had not permitted
His strength again to grow up with his hair°
Garrisoned round about him like a camp
Of faithful soldiery were not his purpose
To use him further yet in some great service,
Not to sit idle° with so great a gift
Useless, and thence ridiculous, about him.
And, since his strength with eyesight was not lost,
God will restore him eyesight to his strength.

Chor. Thy hopes are not ill founded, nor seem vain,
Of his delivery, and thy joy thereon
Conceived, agreeable to a father's love,
In both which we, as next, participate.

Man. I know your friendly minds, and—O, what noise!
Mercy of Heaven! what hideous noise was that?
Horribly loud, unlike the former shout.

Chor. Noise call you it, or universal groan,
As if the whole inhabitation^o perished?
Blood, death, and deathful deeds are in that noise,
Ruin, destruction at the utmost point.

Man. Of ruin^o indeed methought I heard the noise.

1487 **old age** cf. 572, 700, 925 (used only here in Milton's poetry) 1492 **high exploits** cf. 525 1496 cf. 1355 1500 **to sit idle** cf. 566 1512 **the whole inhabitation** the world 1515 **ruin** collapse

Oh! it continues; they have slain my son.

Chor. Thy son is rather slaying them: that outcry
From slaughter of one foe could not ascend.

Man. Some dismal accident it needs must be;
What shall we do—stay here, or run and see?

Chor. Best keep together here, lest, running thither,
We unawares run into danger's mouth.

This evil on the Philistines is fallen:
From whom could else a general cry be heard?
The sufferers, then, will scarce molest us here:
From other hands we need not much to fear.

What if his eyesight (for to Israel's God^o
Nothing is hard) by miracle restored,
He now be dealing dole among his foes,
And over heaps of slaughtered walk his way?

Man. That were a joy presumptuous to be thought.

Chor. Yet God hath wrought things as incredible
For his people of old; what hinders now?^o

Man. He can, I know, but doubt to think he will:
Yet hope would fain subscribe, and tempts belief.
A little stay will bring some notice hither.

Chor. Of good or bad so great, of bad the sooner;
For evil news rides post,^o while good news baits.^o
And to our wish I see one hither speeding,
A Hebrew, as I guess, and of our tribe.

Messenger. O, whither shall I run, or which way fly
The sight of this so horrid spectacle
Which erst^o my eyes beheld, and yet behold?
For dire imagination still pursues me.
But providence or instinct of nature seems,
Or reason, though disturbed and scarce consulted,
To have guided me aright, I know not how,
To thee first, reverend Manoa, and to these
My countrymen, whom here I knew remaining,
As at some distance from the place of horror,
So in the sad event too much concerned.

1527 **Israel's God** cf. 1150 1532-33 Lines (rough as representing a sort of stammer of hope) that someone ventured to smooth by transposition: For God of old hath for his people wrought/ Things as incredible: what hinders now? 1538 **post** post-haste **baits** halts, for rest and refreshment (cf. xii, 1) 1543 **erst** lately

Man. The accident was loud, and here before thee
With rueful cry; yet what it was we hear not.
No preface needs; thou seest we long to know.

Mess. It would burst forth, but I recover breath,
And sense distract, to know well what I utter.

Man. Tell us the sum; the circumstance^o defer.

Mess. Gaza yet stands, but all her sons are fallen,
All in a moment overwhelmed and fallen.

Man. Sad, but thou know'st to Israelites not saddest
 The desolation of a hostile city.
Mess. Feed on that first, there may in grief be surfeit.^o
Man. Relate by whom.
Mess. By Samson.
Man. That still lessens The sorrow, and converts it nigh to joy.

Mess. Ah! Manoa, I refrain too suddenly
 To utter what will come at last too soon,
 Lest evil tidings, with too rude irruption
 Hitting thy aged ear, should pierce too deep.

Man. Suspense in news is torture; speak them out.
Mess. Then take the worst in brief: Samson is dead.
Man. The worst indeed! Oh, all my hope's^o defeated
 To free him hence! but Death, who sets all free,
 Hath paid his ransom now and full discharge.
 What windy joy this day had I conceived,
 Hopeful of his delivery, which now proves
 Abortive as the first-born bloom of spring
 Nipped with the lagging rear of winter's frost.^o
 Yet, ere I give the reins to grief, say first
 How died he? death to life is crown or shame.
 All by him fell, thou say'st; by whom fell he,
 What glorious hand gave Samson his death's wound?
Mess. Unwounded of his enemies he fell.
Man. Wearied with slaughter, then, or how? explain.

1557 **the circumstance** the circumstances or details 1562 "O, I have fed upon this
 woe already, / And now excess of it will make me surfeit" (*Two Gentlemen of*
Verona, III, i, 220 f.). 1571 **hope's** some modern editors drop the apostrophe 1576-
 77 A burst of "Shakespeare," as can be illustrated from a simile in *Love's Labour's*
Lost: "an envious sneaping frost / That bites the first-born infants of the spring" (I, i,
 100 f.).

Mess. By his own hands.
Man. Self-violence? What cause
 Brought him so soon at variance with himself
 Among his foes?
Mess. Inevitable cause
 At once both to destroy and be destroyed;
 The edifice, where all were met to see him,
 Upon their heads and on his own he pulled.
Man. Oh, lastly overstrong against thyself!
 A dreadful way thou took'st to thy revenge.
 More than enough we know, but, while things yet
 Are in confusion, give us, if thou canst,
 Eye-witness of what first or last was done,
 Relation more particular and distinct.
Mess. Occasions drew me early to this city;
 And, as the gates I entered with sun-rise,
 The morning trumpets festival proclaimed
 Through each high street; little I had dispatched,
 When all abroad was rumoured that this day
 Samson should be brought forth, to show the people
 Proof of his mighty strength in feats and games;
 I sorrowed at his captive state, but minded
 Not to be absent at that spectacle.
 The building was a spacious theatre,
 Half round on two main pillars vaulted high,
 With seats where all the lords, and each degree
 Of sort,^o might sit in order to behold;
 The other side was open, where the throng
 On banks^o and scaffolds under sky might stand:
 I among these aloof obscurely stood.

The feast and noon grew high, and sacrifice
 Had filled their hearts with mirth, high cheer, and wine,
 When to their sports they turned. Immediately
 Was Samson as a public servant brought,
 In their state livery clad, before him pipes
 And timbrels; on each side went armed guards,
 Both horse and foot before him and behind,
 Archers, and slingers, cataphracts^o and spears.
 At sight of him the people with a shout

1608 **Of sort** of quality 1610 **banks** benches (French *bancs*) 1619 **cataphracts** men
 in armor on horses in armor

Rifted the air, clamouring their god with praise
 Who had made their dreadful enemy their thrall.
 He, patient but undaunted, where they led him
 Came to the place; and what was set before him,
 Which without help of eye might be assayed,
 To heave, pull, draw, or break, he still performed
 All with incredible, stupendious force,
 None daring to appear antagonist.
 At length for intermission sake they led him
 Between the pillars; he his guide requested
 (For so from such as nearer stood we heard),
 As overtired, to let him lean a while
 With both his arms on those two massy pillars,
 That to the arched roof^o gave main support.
 He unsuspecting led him; which when Samson
 Felt in his arms, with head a while inclined,
 And eyes fast fixed, he stood, as one who prayed,
 Or some great matter^o in his mind revolved.
 At last, with head erect, thus cried aloud:
 'Hitherto, Lords, what your commands imposed
 I have performed, as reason was, obeying,
 Not without wonder or delight beheld.
 Now, of my own accord, such other trial
 I mean to show you of my strength, yet greater,
 As with amaze shall strike all who behold.'^o
 This uttered, straining all his nerves, he bowed;
 As with the force of winds and waters pent,^o
 When mountains tremble, those two massy pillars^o
 With horrible convulsion to and fro
 He tugged, he shook, till down they came, and drew
 The whole roof after them with burst of thunder
 Upon the heads of all who sat beneath,
 Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,
 Their choice nobility and flower, not only
 Of this, but each Philistine city round,
 Met from all parts to solemnize this feast.
 Samson, with these immixed, inevitably

1634 **the arched roof** cf. i, 726 1638 **some great matter** cf. ix, 669 1645 punning
 like Satan's and Belial's, vi, 619 ff. 1647 a simile resembling vi, 195-97; also i, 230-
 37 1648 **those two massy pillars** cf. 1633

Pulled down the same destruction on himself;
 The vulgar only 'scaped, who stood without.

Chor. O dearly-bought revenge, yet glorious!
 Living or dying^o thou hast fulfilled
 The work for which thou wast foretold
 To Israel, and now ly'st victorious
 Among thy slain self-killed,
 Not willingly, but tangled in the fold
 Of dire Necessity,^o whose law in death conjoined

Thee with thy slaughtered foes, in number more
Than all thy life had slain before.°

Semichor. While their hearts were jocund and
sublime,°

Drunk with idolatry, drunk with wine,
And fat regorged of bulls and goats,°
Chanting their idol, and preferring
Before our living Dread, who dwells
In Silo,° his bright sanctuary:
Among them he a spirit of frenzy sent
Who hurt their minds,
And urged them on with mad desire
To call in haste for their destroyer;
They, only set on sport and play,
Unweetingly importuned
Their own destruction to come speedy upon them.
So fond are mortal men,
Fallen into wrath divine,
As their own ruin on themselves to invite,
Insensate left, or to sense reprobate,
And with blindness internal struck.

Semichor. But he, though blind of sight,

1661 **Living or dying** cf. x, 974 1666 **dire Necessity** *dira Necessitas*, Horace,
Carmina, III, xxiv, 6 1667—68 “The dead which he slew at his death were more
than they which he slew in his life” (Judg. xvi, 30). 1669 **sublime** elated 1671 **of
bulls and goats** cf. xii, 292 1674 **Silo** (Anglican Version Shiloh, but Milton always
avoids the “Sh” sound in names) a town of Palestine north of Bethel where “the
whole congregation of the children of Israel . . . set up the tabernacle of the
congregation” after the conquest of Canaan (Josh. xviii, 1) “where it remained till
taken by the Philistines at the death of Eli” (marginal note)—300 to 400 years (cf.
Jer. vii, 12).

Despised, and thought extinguished quite,
With inward eyes illuminated,
His fiery virtue roused
From under ashes into sudden flame,
And as an evening dragon° came,
Assailant on the perched roosts
And nests in order ranged
Of tame villatic° fowl, but as an eagle
His cloudless thunder bolted on their heads.
So Virtue, given for lost,
Depressed and overthrown, as seemed,
Like that self-begotten bird°
In the Arabian woods embost,°
That no second knows nor third,
And lay erewhile a holocaust,°
From out her ashy womb now teemed,
Revives, reflourishes, then vigorous most
When most inactive deemed,
And, though her body die, her fame survives,
A secular° bird, ages of lives.

Man. Come, come; no time for lamentation now,
Nor much more cause; Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroically hath finished
A life heroic, on his enemies
Fully revenged—hath left them years of mourning,
And lamentation to the sons of Caphtor°
Through all Philistian bounds. To Israel
Honour hath left and freedom, let but them
Find courage to lay hold on this occasion;
To himself and father’s house eternal fame,°

1692 **dragon** serpent 1695 **villatic** farmyard 1699 **that self-begotten bird** the phoenix. In the words of Sir Thomas Browne, "That there is but one phoenix in the world, which after many hundred years burneth itself and from the ashes thereof ariseth up another, is a conceit not new or altogether popular, but of great antiquity; not only delivered by humane authors, but frequently expressed also by holy writers." 1700 **embost** embosked, hidden in the woods 1702 **holocaust** a sacrifice wholly consumed by the fire (Greek, *entirely burnt*) 1707 **secular** living for ages (*saecula*) or centuries 1713 **the sons of Caphtor** the Philistines (Jer. xlvii, 4; Deut. ii, 23) 1717 **eternal fame** cf. vi, 240

And, which is best and happiest yet, all this
 With God not parted from him, as was feared,
 But favouring and assisting to the end.
 Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
 Or knock the breast; no weakness, no contempt,
 Dispraise, or blame; nothing but well and fair,
 And what may quiet us in a death so noble.
 Let us go find the body where it lies
 Soaked in his enemies' blood, and from the stream
 With lavers pure and cleansing herbs wash off
 The clotted gore. I, with what speed^o the while
 (Gaza is not in plight to say us nay)
 Will send for all my kindred, all my friends,
 To fetch him hence, and solemnly attend,
 With silent obsequy and funeral train,
 Home to his father's house; there will I build him
 A monument, and plant it round with shade
 Of laurel ever green^o and branching palm,^o
 With all his trophies hung, and acts enrolled
 In copious legend, or sweet lyric song.
 Thither shall all the valiant youth resort,
 And from his memory inflame their breasts
 To matchless valour and adventures high;
 The virgins also shall, on feastful days,
 Visit his tomb with flowers, only bewailing
 His lot unfortunate in nuptial choice,
 From whence captivity and loss of eyes.

Chor. All is best, though we oft doubt
 What the unsearchable dispose
 Of Highest Wisdom brings about,
 And ever best found in the close.
 Oft he seems to hide his face,^o
 But unexpectedly returns,
 And to his faithful champion hath in place
 Bore witness gloriously; whence Gaza mourns,
 And all that band them to resist
 His uncontrollable intent:

1728 **with what speed** add possible 1735 **laurel ever green** compare the opening of "Lycidas" **branching palm** cf. i, 139; vi, 885. 1749 "Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger" (Ps. xxvii, 9).

His servants he, with new acquist^o
 Of true experience from this great event,
 With peace and consolation hath dismissed,
 And calm of mind all passion spent.

1755 **acquist** acquisition

LYCIDAS

The circumstances of the composition and publication of “Lycidas” are related on pages xxi-xxii.

The problem in reading Milton is not so much the extent of his learning as its now unfamiliar area. Up through the nineteenth century the classically educated Englishman was found in sufficient numbers reading his Milton without footnotes. Mark Pattison said that the full enjoyment of “Lycidas” was a final fruit of literary culture. Macaulay issued his impromptu definition of an educated man: one who reads Plato with his feet on the fender. He meant, of course, reads Plato in Greek (and perhaps it would be well to add that he meant by a fender something that goes around a fireplace). But those days are gone, though the Greek and Roman classics have been returning through a wider (and often paperbacked) door of late—that of translation. This is the way for the average reader now, and it is a question of making the minimum suggestions as to what works to be especially aware of while reading “Lycidas” (and again for *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*).

Theocritus’ *First Idyl*, the *Lament for Bion* attributed to Moschus, and Virgil’s *Fifth* and *Tenth Eclogues* are basic. These few pages will serve to bring glints of recognition for which the ordinary school curriculum once laid the basis. One will understand that Milton has a procession of lamenting figures largely because Theocritus and Virgil had one, or asks a question (“Where were ye, Nymphs?”) that actually is a translation from the Greek. There is no major strand in the poem for which a precedent cannot be found. One must know, like the author, what kind of poem a pastoral elegy is. It is barbarous to be, like Dr. Johnson, impatient with its allegory and its devices: “Nothing can less display knowledge or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without any judge of his skill in piping; and how one god asks another god what is become of Lycidas, and how neither god can tell.” Nothing can less display knowledge than such prejudice as this against the forms and ceremonies of centuries of great poetry, including Shelley’s “Adonais” and Matthew Arnold’s “Thyrsis.” “Lycidas” flaunts its artifice, pulls the stops of all the conventions. Like Spenser’s “Shepherds Calender” or his memorial stanzas on Sidney, “Astrophel,” it delights to make something new of something old. In verse form it is a free improvisation—but modeled on the Italian *canzone*. Even where we are most prone to suspect a personal note, as in the dedicated man’s allusion to girls, 67—69, it may be that note comes in because Bion’s famous “Lament for Adonis” has an erotic tone; the names of the girls derive demonstrably from Horace and Virgil. Just as important literarily as the fact that Edward King drowned is the fiction that Daphnis drowned in Theocritus’ *First Idyl*. Feelings are disguised, given esthetic distance; antique guises become charged with emotion. One sees the realization of Emily Dickinson’s statement: “Nature is a haunted house/Art is a house that tries to be haunted.”

In this Monody the Author bewails a learned Friend, unfortunately drowned in his passage from Chester on the Irish Seas, 1637; and, by occasion, foretells the ruin of our corrupted Clergy, then in their height.

YET once more, O ye laurels, and once more,^o
Ye myrtles brown,^o with ivy never sere,^o
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,^o
And with forced fingers rude
Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.^o
Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear^o
Compels me to disturb your season due,
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime,
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer.^o
Who would not sing for Lycidas?^o he knew^o
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.^o
He must not float upon his watery bier

1-5 Milton, writing around the time of his twenty-ninth birthday, had done no verse for three years—not since “Comus” (1634). Previously in English or Latin verses he had mourned no fewer than seven persons, not counting his lines “On Shakespeare” for the Second Folio. 2 **brown** dark **never sere** All three plants are evergreens (the first two grow on Parnassus) and thus symbols of immortality. 3 **crude** Latin *crudus*, unripe 5 A protest of unreadiness that is ironic in the light of the claims that can be—and have been—advanced for “Lycidas” as the greatest poem in the English language. 6 **dear** of intimate concern 8—9 a figure of repetition called epanalepsis

combined with another called epizeuxis—one of a number of artful devices to be found within the 193 lines 10 The question is patterned after Virgil's *neget quis carmina Gallo?* (*Ecl.* X, 3). **knew** i.e., knew how. The manuscript and a presentation copy at Cambridge have "well" inserted before *knew*. 11 **build the lofty rhyme** an expression like Horace's *condis amabile carmen* and with closer Greek analogues.

Unwept, and welter° to the parching wind,
 Without the meed° of some melodious tear.°
 Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well°
 That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring,
 Begin, and somewhat loudly sweep the string.
 Hence with denial vain and coy° excuse:
 So may some gentle Muse°
 With lucky° words favour my° destined urn,
 And as he passes turn
 And bid fair peace be to my° sable shroud!
 For we were nursed upon the selfsame hill,
 Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill,°
 Together both, ere the high lawns° appeared
 Under the opening eyelids of the Morn,
 We drove a-field, and both together heard
 What time° the grey-fly° winds° her sultry horn,
 Battening° our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
 Oft till the star that rose at evening, bright,°
 Toward heaven's descent had sloped his westering
 wheel.
 Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute,
 Tempered° to the oaten flute,
 Rough Satyrs danced, and Fauns with cloven heel
 From the glad sound would not be absent long,
 And old Damaetas° loved to hear our song.
 But, oh! the heavy change now thou art gone,
 Now thou art gone, and never must return!
 Thee, Shepherd, thee the woods and desert caves,
 With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
 And all their echoes, mourn.
 The willows and the hazel copses green

13 **welter** toss or roll about 14 **meed** recompense **tear** one meaning was dirge, funeral poem 15 Sisters of the sacred well the Muses with their poetic springs 18 coy modest 19 Muse poet 20 lucky propitious 20, 22 my as if italicized 23-24 i.e., Milton and Edward King had the same alma mater. 25 high lawns pastures 28 What time when (quo tempore) the grey-fly also known as the trumpet-fly and heard at hot midday winds blows 29 Battening feeding, fattening 30 Hesperus 33 Tempered attuned 36 old Damaetas in the pastoral allegory this might stand for a tutor, such as Joseph Mede, fellow of Christ's College, who died in 1638 at the age of fifty-two.

Shall now no more be seen,
 Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
 As killing as the canker° to the rose,
 Or taint-worm° to the weanling herds that graze,
 Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear,
 When first the white-thorn° blows,
 Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.
 Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
 Closed o'er the head of your loved Lycidas?
 For neither were ye playing on the steep
 Where your old bards, the famous Druids,° lie,
 Nor on the shaggy top of Mona° high,
 Nor yet where Deva° spreads her wizard stream.
 Ay me! I fondly° dream
 Had ye been there, . . . for what could that have done?
 What could the Muse herself° that Orpheus bore,

The Muse herself for her enchanting son,
 Whom universal nature did lament,
 When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
 His gory visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?°

Alas! what boots it° with uncessant° care
 To tend the homely, slighted, shepherd's trade,°

45 **canker** cankerworm 46 **taint-worm** a worm or crawling larva noxious to cattle
 48 **the white-thorn** the hawthorn 53 **Druids** the priests and bards of the ancient
 Britons, thought of as buried in northern Wales 54 **Mona** same as Anglesey, island
 off the northwest coast of Wales 55 **Deva** the river Dee runs through Chester,
 whence King set sail; called wizard because, as Giraldus Cambrensis wrote, the
 waters "change their fords every month, and as it inclines more towards England or
 Wales" makes it possible to "prognosticate which nation will be successful or
 unfortunate during the year" 56 **fondly** both foolishly and affectionately 58 **the**
Muse herself Calliope was the mother of Orpheus 61-63 This ideal poet, indifferent
 to womankind after his failure to bring back Eurydice from Hades, was set upon by
 a "wild rout" (*Paradise Lost*, vii, 34 ff.) of Thracian women, angry maenads in the
 midst of their Bacchanalian orgies, who tore him to pieces. His head was tossed into
 the Hebrus river and, still lamenting, floated across the Aegean to the island of
 Lesbos. 64 **what boots it** what does it avail (as at *Samson Agonistes*, 560) **uncessant**
 MS. has *incessant*. 65 **shepherd's trade** poet's craft

And strictly meditate° the thankless Muse?
 Were it not better done, as others use,
 To sport with Amaryllis° in the shade,
 Or with° the tangles of Neaera's hair?
 Fame is the spur° that the-clear° spirit° doth raise
 (That last infirmity of noble mind)
 To scorn delights, and live laborious days;
 But the fair guerdon° when we hope to find,
 And think to burst out into sudden blaze,
 Comes the blind Fury° with the abhorred shears,
 And slits the thin-spun life. 'But not the praise,'
 Phoebus replied, and touched my trembling ears:°
 'Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
 Nor in the glistening foil°
 Set off to the world nor in broad rumour lies,
 But lives and spreads aloft by those pure eyes
 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
 Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed.'

O fountain Arethuse,° and thou honoured flood,
 Smooth-sliding Mincius,° crowned with vocal reeds,
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood.
 But now my oat° proceeds,
 And listens to the Herald of the Sea°

66 **meditate** practice (Virgil has *musam meditaris*, *Ecl.* I, 2) 68-69 The names of
 these girls—standing for various youthful pleasures—come respectively from Virgil
 (continuing *Ecl.* I above and including the shade, in umbra) and Horace (who
 mentions the locks, *Carm.* III, xiv, 21-22). 69 **Or with** The first reading was *Hid* in
 (!). It has been suggested that *with* is a verb, *withe*, to twist. 70 **Fame is** the spur
gloria calcar habet (Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, IV, ii, 36) **dear** pure, but in the ambience is the
 Latin word for famous, *clarus* **spirit** object of "doth raise" 73 **guerdon** reward 75
the blind Fury actually one of the Fates, Atropos the "inflexible" 77 **touched my**
trembling ears a mode of reminder not strange to a classicist, since the same god
 does this to the poet in Virgil's *Eclogues*, VI, 3—4 79 **glistening foil** glittering
 setting (of a gem) 85 **Arethuse** in Sicily, and standing for Greek pastoral poetry,
 since Theocritus was a native of Syracuse 86 **Mincius** mentioned by Virgil and
 associated with him, as it is a tributary of the Po, which it joins near his native city
 of Mantua 88 oat the oaten pipe of pastoral poetry 89 **the Herald of the Sea** Triton

That came in Neptune's plea.
 He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?
 And questioned every gust of rugged wings
 That blows from off each beaked promontory;
 They knew not of his story,
 And sage Hippotades° their answer brings,
 That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed:
 The air was calm, and on the level brine
 Sleek Panope° with all her sisters played.
 It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
 Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next Camus,° reverend sire, went footing° slow,
 His mantle hairy and his bonnet sedge,
 Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
 Like to that sanguine flower° inscribed with woe.
 'Ah! who hath reft,'° quoth he, 'my dearest pledge?'°
 Last came, and last did go,
 The Pilot of the Galilean Lake;°
 Two massy° keys he bore of metals twain
 (The golden opes,° the iron shuts amain°).
 He shook his mitred locks,° and stern bespake:
 'How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,

96 **Hippotades** Aeolus (son of Hippotas), deity in charge of the winds 99 **Panope** "all-seeing," a sea nymph, one of the Nereids 103 **Camus** the personification or patron god of the river Cam, as representative of Cambridge University in reedy academic garb **footing** A Latin-French pun has been conjectured here, pedant. 106 **that sanguine flower** the hyacinth, named after Apollo's favorite companion who was accidentally killed by the god's discus. His blood turned into the flower marked AI, AI in sign of Apollo's mourning, thus inscribed *with woe*, since an alumnus has reported that "the sedge of the Cam, when dry, shows markings like a palm-leaf MS. (or like the traditional marks of the hyacinth)." 107 **reft** snatched away **pledge** child 109 Winding up the procession is St. Peter, the keeper of "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xvi, 19). 110 **massy** bulky. Ancient keys were very large; cf. Isaiah, xxii, 22. 111 **The golden opes** "that golden key/ That opes the palace of eternity" ("Comus," 13-14) **amain** with force 112 **mitred locks** wearing a mitre as the prime example of a good bishop

Enow of such as, for their bellies' sake,
 Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold!°
 Of other care they little reckoning make
 Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest.
 Blind mouths!° that scarce themselves know how to hold
 A sheep-hook, or have learned aught else the least
 That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!
 What recks it them?° What need they? They are sped,°
 And when they list° their lean and flashy songs°
 Grate on their scrannel° pipes of wretched straw;
 The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,
 But, swollen with wind and the rank mist they draw,
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:

115 Ruskin commented (in *Sesame and Lilies*): "Do not think Milton uses those three words to fill up his verse, as a loose writer would. He needs all the three; specially those three, and no more than those—'creep,' and 'intrude,' and 'climb'; no other words would or could serve the turn, and no more could be added. For they exhaustively comprehend the three classes, correspondent to the three characters, of men who dishonestly seek ecclesiastical power. First, those who 'creep' into the fold; who do not care for office, nor name, but for secret influence, and do all things occultly and cunningly, consenting to any servility of office or conduct, so only that

they may intimately discern, and unawares direct, the minds of men. Then those who 'intrude' (thrust, that is) themselves into the fold, who by natural insolence of heart, and stout eloquence of tongue, and fearlessly perseverant self-assertion, obtain hearing and authority with the common crowd. Lastly, those who 'climb,' who, by labour and learning, both stout and sound, but selfishly exerted in the cause of their own ambition, gain high dignities and authorities, and become 'lords over the heritage,' though not 'ensamples to the flock.' ” 119 **Blind** mouths A metaphor which Ruskin also illuminates: “Those two monosyllables express the precisely accurate contraries of right character, in the two great offices of the Church—those of bishop and pastor. A Bishop means a person who sees [Greek]. A Pastor means one who feeds. The most unbishoply character a man can have is therefore to be Blind. The most unpastoral is, instead of feeding, to want to be fed—to be a Mouth.” 122 **What recks** it them? what do they care? **They are sped** They prosper. 123 list wish **flashy songs** poor (literally, watery) sermons 124 **scrannel** shriveled and thin and harsh (a word possibly of Milton’s invention)

Besides what the grim wolf with privy paw^o
Daily devours apace, and nothing said.
But that two-handed engine at the door
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more.’^o

Return, Alpheus, the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,^o
And call the vales and bid them hither cast
Their bells and flowerets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use^o
Of shades, and wanton winds, and gushing brooks,
On whose fresh lap the swart star^o sparsely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamelled eyes,^o
That on the green turf suck the honied showers,
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.

128 **the grim wolf with privy paw** doubtless a reference to the Church of Rome, with its secret proselytizing agents, the Jesuits 130—31 The most famous crux in English literature, of which not fewer than forty different explanations can be traced in print. The door should be the door of the sheepfold, 115, which is the door of the church (which is, in turn, the way to heaven, opened by the golden key—111). It would be consistent with the verse paragraph—“the iron shuts amain” (111)—if the two-handed threat had to do with death and damnation, the simultaneous fate that impends over the corrupt priest (see Milton’s headnote to his poem). Judging from Milton’s only other use of “two-handed” (*Paradise Lost*, vi, 250—53), the *engine* is a two-handed sword, a perfectly normal meaning once, where the modern reader thinks only of a battery engine or a machine with moving parts. The Lord wields it—or possibly the militant archangel Michael of the next verse paragraph (161 ff.); 131 has its parallel in vi, 317-18. 132—33 The river referred to literally does go underground, as readers of Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan” will remember: “Where Alph the sacred river ran/ Through caverns measureless to man/ Down to a sunless sea.” The mythological explanation was that the river-god Alpheus dived under the sea from the Peloponnesus in pursuit of the nymph Arethusa (cf. 85) and came up in Sicily, where his beloved was turned into a fountain and their waters mingled. 136 **use** are accustomed (as at 67) 138 **the swart star** Sirius, the Dog Star, so called because at the time of its appearance the complexion or grass is turned to a swart, or dark, color 139 **quaint enamelled eyes** pretty varicolored blossoms

Bring the rathe^o primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe^o and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freaked^o with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attired woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears;
Bid amaranthus^o all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the laureate hearse where Lycid lies.

For so, to interpose a little ease,
 Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise,
 Ay me! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
 Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled;
 Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,^o
 Where thou perhaps under the whelming tide
 Visit'st the bottom of the monstrous^o world,
 Or whether thou, to our moist vows^o denied,
 Sleep'st by the fable of Bellerus^o old,
 Where the great Vision of the guarded mount^o
 Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.^o
 Look homeward, Angel, now, and melt with ruth,

142 **rathe** early 143 **crow-toe** the crowfoot or wild hyacinth; tufted describes the plant when in flower. 144 **freaked** streaked 149 **amaranthus** not, of course, the mythical flower of Paradise Lost, iii, 352, but probably love-lies-bleeding. 156 A northern reference, to be followed by extreme southern references. The Hebrides are the islands on the west coast of Scotland. 158 **monstrous** full of monsters of the deep 159 **moist vows** tearful prayers 160 **Bellerus** Bellerium was the Roman name of Land's End (the southwestern tip of Cornwall). The fable is probably that told in Milton's History of Britain of a battle between giants. 161 **mount** St. Michael's Mount, near Penzance in Cornwall, described in a 1906 Baedeker as "a curious rocky islet, rising precipitously to a height of 230 ft., and connected with the shore by a natural causeway . . . a miniature copy of Mont St. Michel in Normandy. Its earliest occupant, according to the legend, was the Giant Cormoran, slain by Jack the Giant-killer. The priory at the top was dedicated to St. Michael, who is said to have appeared to some hermits here very early in the Christian era." Thus Milton, as so often, mingles Christian and non-Christian elements. 162 **Namancos and Bayona's hold** Spanish strongholds faced by the guardian angel Michael, who in the next line is bid to look back "homeward."

And, O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.
 Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
 For Lycidas, your sorrow, is not dead,
 Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
 So sinks the day-star^o in the ocean bed,
 And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
 And tricks^o his beams, and with new-spangled ore
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
 So Lycidas, sunk low but mounted high,
 Through the dear might of Him that walked the waves,
 Where, other groves and other streams along,
 With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
 And hears the unexpressive nuptial song^o
 In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
 There entertain him all the Saints above,
 In solemn troops and sweet societies,
 That sing, and singing in their glory move,
 And wipe the tears forever from his eyes.^o
 Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more;
 Henceforth thou art the Genius of the shore,^o
 In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
 To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the uncouth^o swain to the oaks and rills,^o
 While the still morn went out with sandals grey;
 He touched the tender stops of various quills,^o
 With eager thought warbling his Doric lay;^o
 And now the sun had stretched out all the hills,
 And now was dropt into the western bay;
 At last he rose, and twitched his mantle blue:
 To-morrow to fresh woods, and pastures new.

168 **the day-star** the sun (the analogy will be with the Sun of Righteousness) 170
tricks decks out 176 **the unexpressive nuptial song** the inexpressible marriage song
 (“Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb.” Rev. xix,
 9). 181 “And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes” (Rev. vii, 17; xxi, 4; cf.
 Is. xxv, 8). 183 **the Genius of the shore** Lycidas is seen as a tutelary deity or
 presiding spirit, *genius loci* or patron saint. 186 **uncouth** rustically unknown to fame
 186—93 An ottava rima stanza (abababcc), either in commemoration of the
 influence of the Italian Renaissance or by way of glancing at the poet’s imminent
 trip to Italy, the “fresh woods, and pastures new” 188 **quills** reeds of a Pan’s pipe
 189 **Doric lay** Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus wrote in the Doric dialect.

AFTERWORD

In January 1818, the poet Leigh Hunt showed his friend John Keats a clipping of Milton's hair. Milton! This was better than an autograph; it was physical contact with greatness, like touching the foot of a giant. Starstruck, Keats recorded his awe in a poem, aptly titled "Lines on Seeing a Lock of Milton's Hair":

. . . I feel my forehead hot and flush'd—
Even at the simplest vassal of thy power; A lock of thy bright hair—

Milton's commanding voice was inescapable for a young poet of Keats's day. "Thy spirit never slumbers," Keats avowed, "but rolls about our ears / For ever and for ever." He would have to grow old and wise, too, he thought—"grey-gone in passion"—before he could give the world verses worthy of Milton, that "live Temple of sweet noise."

The sublime Milton—or, in the Victorian critic Matthew Arnold's estimate, "the one artist of the highest rank in the great style whom we have"—lives on in thousands of scholarly studies, hundreds of Milton-inspired plays, paintings, songs, and novels, and in the 630 English words that he coined and that it's hard to imagine living without, from "fragrance" and "stunning" to "lovelorn," "terrific," and "pandemonium." We take for granted that *Paradise Lost* is a classic and its author among the most powerful and renowned poets of any age or country. But in Milton's day, these were not foregone conclusions. In fact, if the Heavenly Muse invoked in the opening lines of *Paradise Lost* had actually dropped in on the aging poet and cast an eye over his career, she might have laid a bet against lasting fame, even if Milton did courageously pursue "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme."

A Puritan biblical scholar who prided himself on diligent study of ancient Roman and Greek literature—all of it—in the original, Milton held quirky, unpopular views for his day on divorce (pro), a free press (pro), and the monarchy (down with it). But he was not the kind of bad boy we like to think poets are made of. No drinking, no devilry, no loose women, just a little doctrinal controversy and a steely nerve. At Christ College, Cambridge, he was prim enough to earn the epithet "The Lady of Christ's." During the Civil War, Milton sided with Oliver Cromwell, turning from poetry to pamphlet writing in the way that another man might pick up his sword and rush into the street. When Cromwell rewarded him with an administrative job in the new government, he took advantage of his position to engage in dazzling, mean-spirited banter with scholars across Europe, mowing down rivals with a "puritanical savageness of manners" that he enjoyed believing led to the early death of one of his opponents.¹

In the turbulent aftermath of the Restoration of the monarchy, Milton's friends and enemies—possibly even Milton himself—expected to see his head on a pike at Westminster Hall next to Cromwell's.² As Cromwell's Latin Secretary, Milton had penned fiery defenses of the overthrow and execution of King Charles I with what now seems a giddy lack of forethought. Even in the waning days of the Commonwealth, Milton kept churning out radical pamphlets, desperate to fend off a return to monarchy. At the end of May 1660, with London celebrating the arrival of Charles II from exile in Europe, Milton went into hiding. Eventually he was arrested and, although fully blind by then, imprisoned in the Tower of London for weeks until released by Parliament. While he lived, he never recovered his fortune or his public stature.

How John Milton evolved from persona non grata, lucky to escape torture and hanging, into one of his country's most honored poets—"the God-given organ-voice of England," as Tennyson put it—is a lesson in the making of literary fame against staggering odds. Except for "Lycidas" and parts of *Comus*, few of Milton's stately, precocious early writings herald a poetic talent on the scale of the author of *Paradise Lost*. How did this work of his old age—a twelve-part religious epic on the Fall of Man—become an undisputed classic? And more than a classic: one of the foundational works of English literature?

Any great artistic success depends on a confluence of factors so tricky and tenuous—and so hard to reproduce when the next work of art comes along—that it can seem miraculous. To begin with, we have the Restoration to thank for Milton's masterpiece, since only when completely barred from the political battlefield could Milton settle down to finish the epic he had been tinkering with for years—the poem "so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die."^{3†}

Still, the composition of *Paradise Lost* required a herculean effort of will on Milton's part. In these years he lived, according to one early biographer, "in Perpetual Terror of being Assassinated." Printed attacks on him circulated and the new regime began harshly repressing political dissent and

attacks on the established church—previously Milton’s idea of a good time. Due to his blindness, writing anything at all required the cooperation of several variously qualified assistants who wrote from dictation. He was “perpetually Asking One Friend or Another who Visited him to Write a Quantity of Verses he had ready in his Mind,” and if his assistant was late, would complain that he “wanted to be Milked.”³

To add to these obstacles, *Paradise Lost* had a rival for its author’s attentions: Milton’s major theological treatise, *De Doctrina Christiana*, begun in about 1655. This, in fact, was the work closer to his heart—his greatest possession, as he described it. Based on his study of both Testaments, *De Doctrina* expounds Milton’s disbelief in the Trinity and his related Arianism (the conviction that Jesus is not equal to God, but a “creation” like man and the universe), a central feature of *Paradise Lost* but a dangerous view—considered heterodox by some and by others frankly heretical. For this reason, perhaps, Milton left *De Doctrina* unfinished at his death.⁴

When the Great Plague of 1665 reached Milton’s poor and crowded London parish, his young Quaker friend Thomas Ellwood found him a country cottage at Chalfont St. Giles. Here Milton probably completed his epic. He’d shared the book with several trusted friends—some of whom, like his nephew, had helped with dictation—but only Ellwood recorded his response for posterity. When Ellwood returned from one of his imprisonments (Quakers were heavily persecuted under Charles II), Milton handed him a manuscript copy of *Paradise Lost*. “He asked me how I liked it,” recalled Ellwood in his autobiography: “I pleasantly said to him, Thou hast said much here of *Paradise Lost*, but what hast thou to say of *Paradise Found*?”

Milton may not have received this deflating response as “pleasantly” as Ellwood delivered it, but he was good-natured enough to credit Ellwood privately when he later wrote *Paradise Regained*.

The plague recurred in bouts for another year, only really abating with the Great Fire of September 1666, in which Milton’s birthplace and childhood home perished, along with most of what we consider the City of London. Between the Great Plague, the Great Fire, and an eclipse earlier that summer, public feeling was brittle and apocalyptic. God’s judgment was clearly against England, even if no one could agree on which sins—or, more precisely, whose sins—were being punished. In the meantime, Milton had moved to Bunhill Fields on the outskirts of London, the better to supervise the birth of his great poem.

Partly because of a later dispute between Milton’s publishers, we know more about the publication of *Paradise Lost* than about any other seventeenth-century volume. In April 1667, Milton negotiated an agreement with one of the few London publishers who had survived the flames, Samuel Simmons in Aldersgate. This is the earliest surviving book contract, and it demonstrates both Milton’s exacting sensibilities and his business savvy. Five pounds were to be paid on delivery of copy, and another five pounds after the sale of thirteen hundred copies of the book. It wasn’t much, but author payment in any amount was rare in Milton’s time. That he stipulated terms for the second and third editions suggests that he expected the volume to sell reasonably well.⁵

Censorship had been reenacted under Charles II, which meant that license to print was a prerogative of the Crown. Given his precarious freedom and his larger artistic aims, Milton had been careful to avoid blatant references to contemporary politics in *Paradise Lost*. But any writing by this unreformed old republican would of course be scrutinized for hidden meaning. The licenser assigned to him, Reverend Thomas Tomkyns, could have pointed to several passages that suggest Milton’s lingering attachment to the Good Old Cause, but seems only to have singled out a few lines in Book One comparing Satan to the sun in eclipse. Was this, Tomkyns inquired, “imaginary [imagined] Treason?” He may have read it as a veiled reference to the recent eclipse that had been seen as an omen both for and against the King.

Friends are said to have interceded on Milton’s behalf. In any case, Tomkyns relented, and we still have the manuscript copy of Book One bearing his eventual approval and signature—part of the incredible, expanding body of surviving records of Milton’s life and work.

Paradise Lost appeared in London bookshops in October 1667, when Milton was fifty-nine. Despite the government imprimatur, Simmons was nervous enough to leave his name off the title page when he first bound the pages. Bibliographers have found at least nine different title pages in copies of this first edition, some with different booksellers listed, most without Simmons’s name, and one anxious version with Milton’s name reduced to “J.M.” These variants probably reflect Simmons’s attempts to market the book in different ways, since Milton’s epic did not exactly fly off the bookshop shelves.

Complaints about the vagueness of the title page reached his publisher; complaints about the blank verse reached the indignant author. At Simmons’s request, Milton wrote a prose summary of the action in each of the original ten books and took the opportunity to explain his decision not to use rhyme in a famous essay called “The Verse” added to the front matter of later copies of the first

edition. Ever modest, Milton chided “vulgar readers” who preferred rhyme and pointed out what a favor he was doing for literature in providing “an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recover’d to Heroic Poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of Rimeing.”

Within about eighteen months, the first edition of thirteen hundred had sold out. Simmons did not reprint for five years. In 1674, the year of Milton’s death, he issued a new edition with the poem reorganized into twelve books.

There was no separating *Paradise Lost* from the troubled reputation of its author. Early readers pored over its pages for theological error and evidence of Milton’s well-known radicalism. Relieved to find the work as pious as it was ambitious, Milton’s friend Andrew Marvell wrote a poem in praise of it: “Thou hast not miss’d one thought that could be fit, / And all that was improper dost omit.” Many readers couldn’t get past the blank verse, however, sometimes equating it with Milton’s nonconforming religious views. From the beginning, his choice had been considered eccentric, even barbarous. With Milton’s permission, John Dryden wrote a rhymed libretto for an opera based on the poem. *The State of Innocence, and Fall of Man* appeared in 1677 with a note describing *Paradise Lost* as “one of the greatest, most noble, and most sublime POEMS, which either this Age or Nation has produc’d.”

But the poem was not established in the canon yet and its originality invited attack. A few years after Milton’s death, Dryden felt it safe to point out that there were “flats amongst his Elevations.” “Cannot I admire the height of his Invention, and the strength of his Expression,” he remarked, “without defending his antiquated words, and the perpetual harshness of their sound?”

And there must have been many seventeenth-century readers whose opinion of Milton matched that of William Winstanley in his *Lives of the Most Famous English Poets* (1687):

John Milton was one, whose natural parts might deservedly have given him a place amongst the principal of our English Poets. . . . But his Fame is gone out like a Candle in a Snuff, and his Memory will always stink, which might have ever lived in honourable Repute, had not he been a notorious Traytor, and mostly impiously and villainously bely’d that blessed Martyr King Charles the First.

But the Miltonic era was still to come. After the third printing of *Paradise Lost*, Milton’s widow sold her rights in the work to Simmons for just eight pounds. In 1681, Simmons transferred these rights to Brabazon Aylmer for twenty-five pounds, which must have seemed a tidy profit for a little-known poem by an author whose name made loyal Englishmen shiver. Aylmer, in turn, sold half interests in the poem to Jacob Tonson and Richard Bentley, who conceived a magnificent new edition—the first illustrated edition of *Paradise Lost* (with engravings designed by the Spanish-born artist John Baptist Medina) and what would become the most important illustrated book of the seventeenth century—known as the 1688 folio. Supported by subscription (again, a first for English publishing), the 1688 folio lists all five hundred financial contributors in the back of the book, each prominent name offering a powerful endorsement of Milton’s work. Thanks in large part to the folio, *Paradise Lost*—practically given away by Milton’s widow—appeared in more than one hundred editions in the eighteenth century. The novelty and beauty of the illustrations may have worked in the way that a movie version of a literary novel does now, bringing a wider audience to a book that might have typically drawn only a niche readership. We know from Defoe that by 1711, the “general reputation” of *Paradise Lost* was that of “the greatest, best, and most sublime work now in the English tongue.”

In other words, a classic.

No one writes a classic. A classic is not a work of art in itself but a kind of reverberation—a dust cloud of memory and association that clings to the art that has most affected people. Of course, any work aiming for immortality has to possess the complexity and strength to sustain interest over many generations. A little controversy doesn’t hurt; nor does a little obscurity, something to keep the scholars arguing. But, after these qualities, what a would-be classic most needs is a champion. A good argument could be made that Tonson, who held a monopoly on the poem for decades and promoted it relentlessly, was the force behind the rising status of *Paradise Lost*, but his financial self-interest excludes him. The true champion of *Paradise Lost* was Joseph Addison. An essayist, playwright, and politician born two years before Milton’s death, Addison took it upon himself to explain the poem in a series of essays that ran in eighteen Saturday editions of *The Spectator* in the early months of 1712. These were avidly read and talked about at the time, but were also reprinted by Tonson in later editions of *Paradise Lost*, which perpetuated their influence. Given Addison’s immense popularity—he was considered the leading English prose stylist of his century, and remained the textbook model for English and American writing for the next 150 years—even his slightest praise brought new readers to Milton.

Though not strikingly original, Addison’s Milton papers lucidly presented what would become the mainstream response to *Paradise Lost*. Addison defended Milton against critics who had argued

that his poem did not meet Aristotle's rules for the epic (a central issue for critics of the day, however trivial it seems now) and emphasized Milton's debts to his classical learning. When necessary, he pointed out inconsistencies or "unseemliness," such as Milton's fondness for "Heathen Fables" despite his Christian subject matter. Addison's Milton papers were so celebrated that Voltaire was moved to remark: "One would be apt to think that Milton has not obtained his true reputation, till Mr. *Adisson* [sic], the best Critick as well as the best Writer of his Age, pointed out the most hidden Beauties of the *Paradise Lost*, and settled forever its Reputation."

Largely due to Addison, Milton became the presiding genius of eighteenth-century letters, a kind of rustic forebear of neoclassical writers like Pope—more fruitful and vigorous, it was thought, but less courtly and refined. A shaping force on almost every writer to follow, Milton was the master to be grappled with, imitated, fought against. With the door thrown open, even Milton's most political works could be reprinted—like his notorious *Eikonoklastes*, his defense of the overthrow of Charles I. Handel achieved tremendous popular success with his musical adaptations of "L'Allegro," "Il Penseroso" and *Samson Agonistes*. Stage adaptations of *Comus* and *Paradise Lost* became commonplace. By midcentury, there were at least eleven translations of *Paradise Lost* into Latin, the "universal language" of the learned in Europe—a strong bid for international acceptance of Milton's status as a classic writer.

Naturally, the cultural embrace of such a fundamentally radical writer invited reaction. In 1777, the literary lion Samuel Johnson had been commissioned to write a series of brief biographical prefaces for a multivolume collection of English poetry. After a slow start, he ended up penning lengthy essays, eventually published as *Lives of the Poets*, a lively, penetrating, and opinionated series still considered the finest example of literary criticism of his century. If you wanted to be remembered—and didn't mind being skewered in the process—you could do no better than being written about by Samuel Johnson.

Johnson's "Milton" essay emerged during six weeks in the winter of 1778-79. Here was a worthy adversary for Milton, a similarly brilliant and well-educated critic who would not be overawed by Milton's juvenilia ("the products of his vernal fertility have been surpassed by many") or by his fiery diatribes. Johnson delighted in puncturing Milton's vanity, quoting his leaden jokes and remarking that in Florence the young poet "found his way into the academies, and produced his compositions with such applause as appears to have exalted him in his own opinion." Gathering steam, he took issue with most of Milton's political views and activities, branding him an "acrimonious and surly republican." His political notions were founded "in an envious hatred of greatness"; he "felt not so much the love of liberty as repugnance to authority." Not to mention that his writings showed "a Turkish contempt of females."

But what of the sublime *Paradise Lost*? Its beauties were too numerous to quote. Johnson, a staunch Anglican, could find no objection on religious grounds, either, conceding that "every line breathes sanctity of thought, and purity of manners." "Here is a full display of the united force of study and genius," Johnson professed, and a masterpiece of which England could be justly proud. It dazzled the senses. Yet, at heart, Milton's poem lacked human interest: "*Paradise Lost* is one of the books which the reader admires and lays down, and forgets to pick up again. None ever wished it longer than it is. Its perusal is a duty rather than a pleasure."

Outcry against Johnson's Life was immediate. The poet William Cowper sputtered: "Oh! I could thresh his old Jacket till I made his Pension Jingle in his Pocket." Milton had ascended to the Immortals. How dared Johnson fire potshots at a national treasure? The next major biographer, William Hayley, unabashedly pronounced Milton the "greatest English author." Later critics have pointed out how uncongenial Milton and Johnson were politically, religiously, and temperamentally, but few have dared to agree with Johnson in what now seems a breathtakingly honest reading of the poem.

That Milton, in his complicated character, offered something for almost everyone became clear in the next century, when the Romantic writers—who couldn't be bothered with Milton's piety—began to appreciate his radicalism. The tables had turned. True, in celebrating his abuse of tyrants, the Romantics often read Milton in ways that would have startled and appalled him. Percy Bysshe Shelley's *A Defence of Poetry* (1821), for example, argues that Milton's Satan was a moral being "far superior" to his cold and vengeful God. William Blake, who completed two sets of illustrations for *Paradise Lost*, famously dubbed Milton "a true poet and of the devil's party without knowing it."

Almost without fail, Milton was the Romantics' favorite poet, a source of awe and frustration for a generation of writers who aspired to long epics like *Paradise Lost* but did not complete them. Keats rejected his unfinished *Hyperion* (1818-19) because he judged it too Miltonic. Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*—all are directly influenced by *Paradise Lost*.

A subtle change can be seen, though, as the Romantic era closes. The Victorian writers that followed no longer debated Milton's importance or influence (which often came to them most strongly through the work of Keats and other Romantics) and no longer struggled to get out from his shadow; they took Milton for granted, as we do. His influence was pervasive, diffused through the art and literature of their time, and, like Shakespeare and the Bible, largely untouched by later shifts in fashion. Milton had arrived.

—Regina Marler

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NOTE ON THIS EDITION

This edition of Milton's three greatest poems presents a text in modern spelling (but the British rather than the American form of such words as *honour* and *theatre* is adhered to). The more interesting textual variations are given in the footnotes, which also, for the first time in any edition, keep track of the far-flung repetitions of phrases, and the scattered fixed epithets, within (and also to a lesser extent between) *Paradise Lost* and *Samson Agonistes*.

¹
From Johnson's prickly "Life of Milton" in *Lives of the Poets*, 1779—81. There are several good contemporary lives, including Neil Forsyth's *John Milton: A Biography*.

²
Royalists had been forced to dig up Cromwell's body and decapitate it postmortem, since his death two years earlier had cheated them of more satisfying revenge.

³
Although he had begun the poem in about 1658 (notes for a tragedy based on the Fall of Man appear in his notebooks much earlier), the bulk of it appears to have been written in this period of seclusion after the Restoration.

† Milton in "The Reason of Church Government" (1641).

‡ Quotes from early biographers are from Helen Darbishire's wonderful *Early Lives of Milton*.

⁴
The manuscript was discovered in 1823, still tied in its original wrapping, and finally published.

⁵
In later centuries, when the spread of literacy and other factors made publishing more profitable for popular writers, Milton's famous contract became a touchstone in every argument about the greed and chicanery of publishers.